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Editor

A. C. EDWARDS

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MODERN DRAMA

VOLUME I

MAY, 1958

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Foreword

The purpose of *Modern Drama* is, first of all, to stimulate interest in research and in the teaching of the drama since Ibsen. *Modern Drama* will provide space for those whose studies have resulted in discoveries which merit dissemination beyond the classroom. But research may or may not lead to publication. In our day it is too often assumed that research is the handmaid of publication, whereas, as we all know, scholarly research may be done only in order to improve one's teaching. It is hoped that *Modern Drama* will stimulate this kind of research as well as that whose aim is eventual publication.

The scope of *Modern Drama* is limited to the publication of articles on the drama since Ibsen, to book reviews, and to news from abroad. We hope that at least one foreign scholar will be represented in each number of *Modern Drama*. The activity of foreign scholars in the field of recent drama can be seen in the excellent current number of *Etudes Anglaises* which is given over entirely to studies on the contemporary theatre in Great Britain and the United States. A review of this number of *Etudes Anglaises* will appear in the September issue of *Modern Drama*. Professor Scherer's article in our opening number is the first of what we hope will be continuous contributions from abroad.

In order to bring out this first number of *Modern Drama* many friends were victimized. To our cries for aid they have responded nobly, and this is a public acknowledgment of the great debt we owe them. We are grateful especially to Professor Maurice Beebe, editor of *Modern Fiction*, who never lost patience with our many requests for help.

Finally, may I remind our readers that scholarly journals must rely on library subscriptions for their existence? Please bring our quarterly to the attention of your librarian.

A. C. EDWARDS

The Contributors

CYRUS DAY. Professor of English at the University of Delaware. Mr. Day has edited *Songs of John Dryden* and *Songs of Thomas D'Urfey*. He is at work on a critical study of O'Neill's plays.

JACQUES SCHERER. Professeur d'Histoire et Technique du Théâtre Français à la Sorbonne. M. Scherer is the author of *Dramaturgie Classique en France*.

HENRY W. KNEPLER. Associate Professor of English at Illinois Institute of Technology. Mr. Knepler is at work on a book on the historical drama.

MYRON MATLAW. On the English faculty of Hunter College, New York.

CARL E. W. L. DAHLSTRÖM. Professor of English at Portland State College. He is the author of *Strindberg's Dramatic Expressionism*.

MERREL D. CLUBB, JR. Mr. Clubb teaches Old and Middle English at the University of Montana. He is at present working in Rome, as a Fulbright Scholar.

MARTIN PRICE. On the English faculty at Yale University. A Guggenheim Fellow, Mr. Price is now in London. He is the author of *Swift's Rhetorical Art*.

THE ICEMAN AND THE BRIDEGROOM

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DEATH OF O'NEILL'S SALESMAN

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh.

—Matthew 25:5-6

The Iceman Cometh is a play about the death of a salesman; its central theme is the relationship between men's illusions and their will to live. The salesman, Theodore Hickman, or Hickey, as he is called, is a more complex character than Arthur Miller's Willie Loman, and O'Neill's diagnosis of the spiritual *malaise* of the twentieth century is more profound than Miller's. Loman is depicted from the outside: he is the victim of a false and wholly external conception of what constitutes success. He wants, in a worldly sense, to solve the riddle of life, but the questions he asks are superficial and relatively easy for an audience or a reader to answer.

Hickey is depicted from the inside. He is more successful as a salesman than Loman, but he is the victim of a far more insidious disease. He is not versed at first hand (as O'Neill was) in philosophic nihilism, but he has somehow become aware, presumably through a sort of intellectual osmosis, that modern man no longer believes in objective reality and truth. Loman is adrift in contemporary American society; Hickey is adrift in the universe. The difference is a measure of the difference between O'Neill's aims and the aims of almost all other modern dramatists.

A few days before *The Iceman Cometh* opened on Broadway in 1946, O'Neill told a reporter that he had tried to express its "deeper" meaning in its title, and in an interview with S. J. Woolf he said that the verb form "cometh" was a "deliberate reference to biblical language." The play itself, he gave Woolf to understand, had religious significance. It is difficult to see what he can have meant by these hints, for *The Iceman Cometh* has few readily discernible connections either with religion or with the Bible. However, since O'Neill was not in the habit of talking at random about his own work, we would do well, if we want to come to terms with the "deeper" meaning of *The Iceman Cometh*, to assume that he had something specific and important in mind, and to try to discover what it was.

O'Neill looked upon himself, we must remember, as a spiritual physician, and he thought that his mission as a dramatist was to "dig at the

roots of the sickness of today," which he defined as the death of the old God (echoing Nietzsche) and the failure of science and materialism to provide a new one satisfactory to the remnants of man's primitive religious instincts. Most dramatists write about the relationship between man and man, but he was more interested, he said, in the relationship between man and God. His plays, accordingly, often have a metaphysical basis, but since he had lost his faith in God at an early period in his life, and since he thought that it would take a million years of evolution for man "to grow up and obtain a soul," they are seldom religious in any generally accepted sense of the word.

Days without End, which preceded *The Iceman Cometh*, is an exception. Written in 1934, during a brief period of personal happiness, it is a Christian play. The protagonist, a young man very much like O'Neill himself, is torn by religious doubts, but in the final act he enters a Catholic church, prostrates himself before an image of the crucified Jesus, and becomes at last an integrated personality, at peace with himself and with God. O'Neill, in 1934, appeared to have come to the end of his spiritual pilgrimage.

Actually, *Days without End* was a "mere interlude," as he admitted later, and did not reflect his personal religious convictions. For the moment he may have supposed that he could return to the Christian fold, but by 1939, when he wrote *The Iceman Cometh*, his mood had changed from tentative hope to unqualified despair. World War II was beginning, and the human race was obviously "too damned stupid" (this was O'Neill's phrase) to realize that its salvation depended on one "simple sentence": What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Perhaps, O'Neill told a reporter, mankind ought to be dumped down the nearest drain and the world given over to the ants.

These are hardly Christian sentiments, despite the quotation from the New Testament, and *The Iceman Cometh* cannot, therefore, have the same sort of religious significance as *Days without End*: it cannot be a Christian play. Can it be a recantation of the point of view of *Days without End*? Can it be, in any sense, a repudiation of Christianity?

Since O'Neill himself has given us the hint, let us begin our inquiry with the title. On the surface, the iceman is a reference to Hickey's ribald jest that he knows his wife is safe because he has left her with the iceman in the hay. On a "deeper" level, the iceman represents death, as O'Neill pointed out in 1946, and as Larry Slade points out in the play when he learns that Hickey's wife is dead. "It fits," Slade says, "for Death was the Iceman Hickey called to his home."

It is not enough, however, merely to identify the iceman with death. We must realize also that the iceman is the foil of the bridegroom of

Scripture, and that he stands for the opposite of everything the bridegroom stands for. In the symbolism of theology, the bridegroom is always Christ, giver of life eternal. Waiting for the bridegroom symbolizes man's hope of redemption. Union with the bridegroom, conceived as a marriage, is the "final end and realized meaning"¹ of the life of every Christian, the "fulfillment of promise and [the] consummation of hope." Union with the bridegroom signifies victory over death and salvation in the world to come.

Union with the iceman, conceived as adultery, must, then, be a parody of union with the bridegroom, and signify surrender to death and acquiescence in personal annihilation. Evelyn Hickman, after her husband kills her, finds the peace of oblivion in the arms of the symbolical iceman. The other characters in the play will eventually find the same kind of peace when they abandon their illusory hope of happiness, whether here and now on earth, or in a hypothetical Christian hereafter.

Construed in this way, *The Iceman Cometh* (on one of its many levels of meaning) is seen to be a parable of the destiny of man. All men are waiting for the iceman, but only those who have shed their ultimate illusions are aware that the "final end and realized meaning" of their lives is death. "I'm the only real convert to death Hickey made here," says Slade, who speaks for O'Neill in the play. "From the bottom of my coward's heart I mean that now."

"I want to go to the chair," says Hickey, when he realizes that his love for his wife was an illusion, and that he killed her because he hated her. "Do you suppose I give a damn about life now?" he asks the detective who has arrested him. "Why, you bonehead, I haven't got a single damned lying hope or pipe dream left." The other derelicts in Hope's saloon (the world of illusions) lack Slade's philosophic detachment and Hickey's psychopathic insight, and are afraid to face the truth: that waiting for the iceman constitutes the chief employment of their futile lives.

The paradox of fulfillment through annihilation is a concept that O'Neill could have derived either from Schopenhauer or from Freud, who reached the conclusion previously reached by Schopenhauer, though by a different route, that the goal of life is death. The immediate stimulus to his imagination, however, may have been Waldo Frank's novel *The Bridegroom Cometh*, in which the heroine gives herself to a succession of bridegrooms, both spiritual (Christ, Freud, Marx) and material (a husband and several lovers). Only Marx satisfies her need for love, and in the end she finds fulfillment through identification with the masses. O'Neill, unlike Frank, never supposed

1. See L. A. Zander's discussion of the problem of the bridegroom in his *Dostoevsky*, 1948, pp. 97-137.

that a political or sociological nostrum could cure the diseases of the soul.

A second key to O'Neill's attitude toward Christianity in *The Iceman Cometh* is the role of the hardware salesman Hickey. When the curtain rises on Act I, the derelicts in Hope's hotel, slumbering and sleeping in their chairs, are waiting for Hickey to visit them on one of his periodical benders. "Would that Hickey or Death would come," says Willie Oban. But Hickey has tarried: a prostitute has seen him standing at the next corner, and to her surprise he is sober.

"I kidded him," she says. "How's de iceman, Hickey? How's he doin' at your house?" He laughs and says, 'Fine.' And he says, 'Tell de gang I'll be along in a minute. I'm just finishin' figurin' out de best way to save dem and bring dem peace.'"

Hickey, when he arrives, is greeted by a very different cry from "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." "Here's the old son of a bitch," says Rocky; and "Bejees, Hickey, you old bastard, it's good to see you!" says Hope.

But Hickey is no longer the irresponsible drunkard the derelicts once knew and loved. He is on the wagon, and he proposes a stern remedy for what ails them. What he has to sell, in other words, is symbolical hardware, and he himself represents all self-appointed messiahs and saviors who meddle in other people's affairs and tell them how to live. Hence he can be fruitfully compared to Gregers Werle in Ibsen's *Wild Duck*, to Luka in Gorki's *Lower Depths*, and to the mysterious strangers in Jerome's *Passing of the Third Floor Back* and Kennedy's *Servant in the House*.

He also has something in common with Sigmund Freud, and his program of salvation is similar, in a general way, to psychoanalysis. He invites the derelicts to re-examine their pipe dreams (wish fulfillments) and to get rid of them by coming to terms with reality (the reality principle). This, he imagines, will make them happy. It doesn't, of course; and after their abortive attempts to resume their former occupations, they stagger back, demoralized and defeated, to the security of Hope's saloon. They cannot endure life unsupported by illusions, and instead of making them happy, Hickey deprives them of the will to live. Hickey has the last speech in each of the first three acts, and his last word in each is an ironical "happy." The notion that men can be happy in this worst of all possible worlds is an illusion.

Another illusion, or so Freud tells us, is religion. Man does not need its consolations, he says in *The Future of an Illusion*, nor can he remain a child forever. Rather he must venture out into the hostile world and be educated to reality. "Man can endure the cruelty of reality. What, you fear he will not stand the test? But it is at least something to know that one has been thrown on one's own resources."

This is very much like Hickey's program for the individual derelicts

in *The Iceman Cometh*. Over and above their private illusions, however, stands Christianity, the collective illusion of what O'Neill thought of as our bankrupt Western civilization. Religion is an illusion, O'Neill evidently agreed; but unlike Freud, he did not think that the "swine called men" could live without it. Thus, by an extraordinary reconciliation of opposites, he equates the drunken Hickey with the secular savior Freud and the Christian Savior Christ, and at the same time rejects the gospels preached by both. Says Slade:

Honor or dishonor, faith or treachery, are nothing but the opposites of the same stupidity which is ruler and king of life, and in the end they rot in the same grave. All things are the same meaningless joke to me, for they grin at me from the one skull of death.

That O'Neill had this anti-Christian undertone in mind when he compiled his medley of illusions in *The Iceman Cometh* is further substantiated by several tantalizing resemblances² between the play and the New Testament. Hickey as savior has twelve disciples. They drink wine at Hope's supper party, and their grouping on the stage, according to O'Neill's directions, is reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. Hickey leaves the party, as Christ does, aware that he is about to be executed. The three whores correspond in number to the three Marys, and sympathize with Hickey as the three Marys sympathize with Christ. (The implications of this resemblance are not without precedent: Christopher Marlowe, it will be recalled, was accused of saying that the women of Samaria were whores.)

One of the derelicts, Parritt, resembles Judas Iscariot in several ways. He is the twelfth in the list of *dramatis personae*; Judas is twelfth in the New Testament lists of the Disciples. He has betrayed his anarchist mother for a paltry \$200; Judas betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver. He is from the far-away Pacific Coast; Judas was from far-away Judaea. Hickey reads his mind and motives; Christ read Judas's. Parritt compares himself to Iscariot when he says that his mother would regard anyone who quit the "Movement" as a Judas who ought to be boiled in oil. He commits suicide by jumping off a fire escape; Judas fell from a high place (Acts 1:18) or "hanged himself" (Matthew 27:5).

In the light of O'Neill's remarks concerning the Biblical and religious significance of his play, these resemblances can hardly be coincidental. They are no more than an undertone, to be sure—one of many undertones or subordinate layers of meaning—but they are consistent with the main theme of the play, and they account for some of its otherwise unaccountable features: for example, the emphasis on midnight (see Matthew 25:5-6) as the hour appointed for Hope's party, and the unnecessarily large number of derelicts in Hope's saloon. If O'Neill's

2. First called to my attention by Mr. Philip Taylor.

only purpose had been to show that everyone, no matter how degraded, has one last pipe dream to sustain him, four or five derelicts, instead of twelve, would have sufficed, and the play would have been less redundant than, in fact, it is.

O'Neill was fond of hidden symbols and multiple layers of meaning. The nine acts of *Strange Interlude* and the name of the heroine, Nina, symbolize the nine months of a woman's pregnancy. Christine Mannon in *Mourning Becomes Electra* is called Christine (to correspond with Clytemnestra in Aeschylus's trilogy) instead of some other name beginning with "C" because O'Neill wanted to suggest that she is a sort of female anti-Christ or pagan martyr, crucified by a repressive Puritanism for her faith in sexuality. Lavinia Mannon is called Lavinia instead of a name beginning with "E" (to correspond with Electra) because "levin" means lightning or electricity. The name Mannon, from the last part of Agamemnon, suggests Mammon, the figurative divinity of all genuine Mannons. Examples of this sort of ingenuity, culled from other plays by O'Neill, could be multiplied indefinitely.

In addition to Hickey and Christine Mannon, O'Neill likens several other characters to Christ. In *The Fountain*, Bishop Menendez advises Juan to surrender the Indian Nano to the mob.

Juan (*with wild scorn*). Ah, High Priest! Deliver him up, eh?
Menendez. Juan! You are impious! (*Angrily*) It is sacrilege—to compare this Indian dog—you mock our Blessed Savior! You are cursed—I wash my hands—His will be done!

Nina, in *Strange Interlude*, cherishes the illusion that her dead lover Gordon Shaw is the real father of her son. "Immaculate conception," Marsden mutters in an unpublished manuscript version of the play.³ "The Sons of the Father have all been failures!" Nina says, referring both to her son and to Christ. "Failing, they died for us . . . they could not stay with us, they could not give us happiness."

Allusions such as these abound in O'Neill's plays. *Where the Cross Is Made*, to cite a final example, contains what I surmise is a double reference to the sustaining power of illusions (the central theme, as we have seen, of *The Iceman Cometh*). As the curtain falls on the last scene, Nat Bartlett cries out with insane frenzy: "The treasure is buried where the cross is made." On the surface, this means that Nat, like his father, is obsessed by the belief that the trinkets on the island represent a fortune in gold. But the words also suggest that Christianity, symbolized by the Cross, is as much of an illusion as the gold. In view of the way he worked and thought, O'Neill cannot have been unaware of this implication of his title.

These considerations bring to mind an ironic scene in *The Great God*

3. Yale MS. 52, not at present available to scholars, but discussed by Miss Doris Alexander in her brilliant doctoral thesis entitled *Freud and O'Neill: An Analysis of Strange Interlude* (New York University, 1952).

Brown. Dion Anthony, one of O'Neill's favorite characters and a recognizable self-portrait, designs a cathedral which, he boasts, is "one vivid blasphemy from the sidewalk to the tips of the spires!—but so concealed the fools will never know! They'll kneel and worship the ironic Silenus who tells them the best good is never to be born!"

When Brown inherits Dion's soul, he too introduces secret motifs into his work. Of a new state capitol that he designs, he says:

Here's a wondrous fair Capitol! The design would do just as well for a Home for Criminal Imbeciles! Yet to them, such is my art, it will appear to possess a pure common sense, a fat-bellied finality, as dignified as the suspenders of an assemblyman. Only to me will that pompous façade reveal itself as the wearily ironic grin of Pan as he half listens to the laws passed by his fleas to enslave him.

Did O'Neill, in writing *The Iceman Cometh*—the question inevitably presents itself—did O'Neill do what Dion and Brown do in *The Great God Brown*? Did he, that is to say, introduce concealed blasphemies into his play, just as Dion and Brown introduce concealed blasphemies into their architectural designs? And did he laugh in secret at the critics who supposed that he had written a compassionate play in *The Iceman Cometh*, just as Dion and Brown laugh at the fools who do not see through their mockery?

André Malraux once asked if man in the twentieth century could survive after God had died in the nineteenth. O'Neill's answer in *The Iceman Cometh* is no. The derelicts in Hope's saloon, all of them childless, symbolize a humanity that is engaged in the laudable act of committing suicide. As the play ends, Larry Slade stares straight ahead (O'Neill's habitual way of depicting disillusionment) and waits for release from the intolerable burden of life. O'Neill's prolonged search for a faith had led him, not to faith, but to despair.

Could there have been in 1939, a more prophetic anticipation of the self-destructive compulsions of the Age of Nuclear Fission? Is there in dramatic literature a more nihilistic play than *The Iceman Cometh*?

CYRUS DAY

MARIVAUX AND PIRANDELLO

(Translated by LETHEM SUTCLIFFE RODEN)

IF THE PAST CAN INFLUENCE THE PRESENT, it is correct to say also that modern authors, when they have contributed something truly important and have deepened our sensitivity and our understanding, can allow us to see in the work of older authors riches that their contemporaries had not suspected. Since Valéry it is no longer even a paradox to add that certain of these riches could have been unknown to the author himself. This article aims at sketching in broad outlines a re-evaluation of this type by showing how the new ideas on the theatre that have been made familiar by the work of Pirandello can rightly clarify, in a retrospective way, certain aspects of the comedies of Marivaux.

This search for a modern quality in Marivaux is justified first of all by his persistent success. If his plays are read and presented, it is because they can find a place in the modern dramatic landscape, of which "Pirandellianism" is a necessary part. In other French dramatic authors of the eighteenth century, for example Regnard, Lesage or Voltaire, we have discovered nothing more than what their contemporaries themselves saw there; that is perhaps why we now rarely perform them. In contrast, the work of Marivaux has known a very active posthumous life, and the judgments brought to bear on it have greatly varied. Thus, a few years after the death of Marivaux, Lesbros de la Versane published an *Esprit de M. de Marivaux* (1769), which gathered together what we should call today selected excerpts. This anthology contains, he declares, "all the best that M. de Marivaux thought and wrote." Now no fragment of his theatre is printed in the volume; it is only the "philosopher" or the novelist who interested the compiler. In his preface, Lesbros de la Versane alluded, however, to the comedies of Marivaux, but he made a choice, which he declared was that of the author himself, and which differs greatly from ours: "Those which M. de Marivaux valued the most," he writes, "are the *Double Inconstance*, the two *Surprises de l'Amour*, the *Mère confidente*, the *Serments indiscrets*, the *Sincères* and the *Ile des Esclaves*. Which proves how sound his taste was, since these are his best plays."¹ The *Mère confidente* and the *Sincères* were still appreciated at the end of the nineteenth century, and the first was even played fairly often at

1. P. 9. The last sentence is rather naive.

the beginning of the twentieth² up to the very time of the discovery of Pirandello in France; yet one could not say that they appear to us now as suited to our time. The *Ile des Esclaves*, which Sainte-Beuve considered, with a shade of disdain, a "revolutionary pastoral,"³ can scarcely satisfy a public that has become exacting with regard to the treatment of political questions. The *Serments indiscrets*, which is the most ambitious work of Marivaux,⁴ has been recently revived at the Comédie Française, but without great success. As for the plays which seem most alive to us, they do not appear on the list of Lesbros de la Versane: one finds there neither those which have most often been played at the Comédie Française since their creation—the *Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, the *Legs*, the *Epreuve*⁵—nor the *Fausse Confidences* which, interpreted by Madeleine Renaud and her company, dazzled the Parisians of 1946. There is definitely a change in the outlook.

The history of the notion of "marivaudage" would lead to the same conclusion. Littré's *Dictionnaire* gives us a meaning that is still that of the eighteenth century: "A style in which one refines the feeling and expression, and which has been thus named after the qualities and faults of the style of Marivaux." Much that is new has been added to this meaning since Littré. It seems that it is possible to discern today in "marivaudage" an ingenuity that goes beyond the sentimental style and which even ignores altogether stylistic elaboration, an attitude of loving coquetry, the image of a device taking an assumption as a pretext but not concealing what it claims to conceal and resting on an implicit agreement between the mystifier and the mystified, in short, one of the varieties of the "flirt," in the sense in which this English word is used in French. Assuredly, "marivaudage," in the written and spoken language, is employed by people who have never been interested in Marivaux and who do not think of him at all when they use that word. The notion has lived a life independent of its origins, because it has been made to correspond to new needs.

To come back to the stage, inasmuch as Marivaux is a great dramatic author, it is only natural that a new light should have been thrown on him by those who, in the twentieth century, have reconsidered deeply the very notion of theatre. It remained for Pirandello in our century to be the first to give striking literary expression to this "retheatralization of the theatre" (as Georg Fuchs puts it), which, under various names,

2. The *Mère confidente* was revived in 1805 at the Odéon and in 1810 at the Comédie Française; presentations of it were given up to 1926. The *Sincères*, revived at the Odéon in 1891, had thirty-three performances.

3. *Causeries du lundi*, Vol. IX.

4. It was his only comedy in five acts.

5. *Le Jeu de l'amour et du hasard* reached its thousandth performance at the Comédie Française in 1948. The *Legs* and the *Epreuve* were played there 644 and 541 times respectively up to 1945; it is true that these one-act plays did not form the main part of a program. The fourth place in this order of frequency of presentation is taken by the *Fausse Confidences*: 474 performances at the Comédie Française by 1945.

has been the aim of all avant-garde producers and theorists since Antoine. From his most conclusive plays, *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, *Tonight We Improvise*, there emerges one common idea, fundamental and fruitful, which, among other applications, can provide a new key for the work of Marivaux, and which could be expressed thus: fiction is as effectual as reality. To be sure, this idea bears the stamp of a period. It appeared in the twenties in the very heart of Freudian psychoanalysis, which had, like the theatre of Pirandello, a world-wide repercussion. But it existed too, as one element among others, one which had not yet been brought to the fore, in the theatrical system that was used in France several generations before Marivaux. I have been able to show⁶ that the imaginary obstacle was, in French classical drama, as important as, and sometimes more important than, the real obstacle. The taste for the imaginary had spread at the end of the seventeenth century and at the beginning of the eighteenth into the popular forms of the French theatre presented by the *Foire* or by the Italian players. Since this theatre could not take up noble subjects, since it looked for comic effects based upon social claims and for a complicity with the public, the new authors fell back on an exhibition of theatrical devices: they showed them nakedly, and discovered in them, perhaps to their surprise, a dramatic force. This pre-Pirandellianism, already partly Italian, was to end in Marivaux, inasmuch as he wrote in this tradition for the Italian troupe, bearing in mind the actors themselves, to whose talents he adjusted his roles. This interplay of fiction and truth is then explainable historically and it is responsible for the modernity of Marivaux, since we are today more sensitive to it than to the interplay of love and chance.

In several of Marivaux's comedies which concern us most, the Pirandellian aspects are rather easily seen. The Arlequin and Silvia of the *Double Inconstance* love each other at the beginning of the play, or rather they believe they love each other. The fiction with which they come to grips is another love that is imposed upon them or that is suggested to them. In the play it is proposed that they be paired, one to Flaminia and the other to the Prince. At first they rise in indignation against this project, denouncing its unreal character; they see only a distasteful comedy and refuse to play it. But little by little, this comedy becomes the reality; the play is nothing other than the dramatization of means which make them admit, and then demand, this "double inconstancy." In the *Jeu de l'amour et du hasard*, the "jeu" is on another plane: it is behind the mask, and through it, that truth is brought to light. If Silvia and Dorante fell in love immediately and without disguises, there would be no reason to make a comedy of this

6. In my *Dramaturgie Classique en France*, Paris, Nizet, 1950, 1st part, Ch. III.

unhindered action. The double disguising allows the characters not only to experience their emotions and those of their partner, but even to lead these emotions to an intensity that they would never have been able to attain without this creative fiction; there, and not in the theme, which is hackneyed, is the originality of the play and the secret of its strength. The rich Dorante is thus carried to a fit of passion which urges him to propose marriage to the one he believes a simple chambermaid; if the public knows the identity of Silvia, Dorante does not, and is therefore placed in a situation which was exceedingly daring for those times.

We can find this "truth in fiction" in many other details of the dramatic work of Marivaux. Such a scene as that in the *Heureux stratagème*⁷ opposes, in an animated dispute, two interpretations of the same fact as irreconcilable as those which exercise the imagination and the anger of the characters in *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*. Here is the version of the Countess: the Marchioness, "jealous of me because the Chevalier leaves her . . . imagines, in her anger, a Marton whom she throws as a barrier" before the projected marriage between Arlequin and Lisette. But Dorante presents another version, also quite probable. "What! Do you think that the Marchioness believed she was offending you? . . . No, Countess, Arlequin was complaining of an infidelity on the part of Lisette . . . and the Marchioness, to make amends to him, has, through good will, proposed the marriage with Marton who belongs to her." The Countess then cannot know which are the true feelings of the Marchioness, or even if this Marton, who does not appear in the play, is real or imaginary. Her uncertainty will last until the denouement.

But it is in the extraordinary *Acteurs de bonne foi* that the truly Pirandellian "jeu dans le jeu" and the characters' awareness of this situation can best be illustrated. This comedy was so little in accord with its times that Marivaux never was able to have it played and that, as a last resource, he resolved, once his dramatic career had ended, to publish it in 1757 without signing it. André Barsacq has just produced it brilliantly on that same stage of the Théâtre de l'Atelier where his master Dullin had presented Pirandello for the first time in France. The characters of the *Acteurs de bonne foi* are valets and peasants who are made to act, on the occasion of the marriage of their masters, in an impromptu comedy. As the love affairs of the comedy slyly contradict those of reality, the simple actors are not too reassured. Blaise, in asking: ". . . if what I'm going to play were to be true,"⁸ expresses the essential uneasiness of the Pirandellian being; as a matter of fact, Colette declares that she would not marry him except through obedience to her parents. The peasants reach the point of quarreling; the

7. Act II, Scene xi.

8. Scene ii.

noise that they make attracts the austere Madame Argante who asks that they give up the comedy. But a comedy is going to be played, in another sense, by putting obstacles in the way of the marriage that was about to be concluded. The real dramatic action is beginning again. Blaise comments that, in the comedy, his Colette loves Merlin too wholeheartedly; and, henceforth initiated into the meaning of the theatre, he declares: "... in spite of the comedy, all that is true ... because they are pretending to pretend. . . ." Finally, the Notary arrives and everything is settled. To this play may be applied more easily than to any other the advice of Juvet: "To act Marivaux, it is necessary to act as though one were acting."¹⁰

To act as though one were acting is also one of the possible formulations of Brecht's alienation theory, a theory which might lend itself as well, in certain respects, to a modern interpretation of Marivaux. An audience which did not yet know Pirandello saw a Marivaux reduced to delicate and sentimental tones. An audience acquainted with Pirandello is now able to see a harsher and more demonstrative Marivaux.

9. Scene xii.

10. "Marivaux, le théâtre et ses personnages," *Conferencia*, June 15, 1939, p. 35.

JACQUES SCHERER

THE LARK

TRANSLATION VS. ADAPTATION: A CASE HISTORY

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE between the work of a translator of a play and that of an adapter can be stated simply: a translator will try to reproduce the original intact; he will therefore generally try to find a level of language and idiom which achieves that aim. An adapter tries to find an approximate equivalent for the original, not only in terms of the language but in terms of the whole theatrical tradition to which the adaptation is being made. He therefore has to deal with two elements in addition to the linguistic problem; dramatic technique first of all, and secondly those commonly understood national characteristics or attitudes which are relevant to the particular play. Both of these depend on the traditions and therefore on the expectations of the playgoer; they are bound up with each other and often seem no more than two aspects of the same problem.

Often a play and its playwright are served best by a faithful translation which merely transfers all the meaning and content of the work from one language to another. At times, though, a close translation may not lead to such a faithful transfer; in other words, an adapter may at times keep faith with the intent of the playwright by judiciously departing from the original in order to make it comprehensible to an audience used to a different culture or theatrical tradition.

A play which exemplifies this problem of translation and adaptation has recently been performed in Paris, London, and New York. It provides a more interesting case history than usual because its production occurred in three theatrical traditions, not only two, and because it was translated in one case and adapted in the other, both by major dramatists. It is *L'Alouette* (*The Lark*) by Jean Anouilh; translated by Christopher Fry; adapted by Lillian Hellman.

The Lark retells the story of Joan of Arc; this in itself indicates a possible problem in a transfer from one country to another: the national hero of one is not likely to be savored as fully in another. Secondly, there is of course the possibility that the reason for success or failure may lie primarily in the different productions. But both these causes turn out to be quite insignificant in comparison to those which are implicit in the problem of translation versus adaptation. My interest in *The Lark* was aroused by the fact that the play was a great critical and audience success when it was first given in Paris; that it had a mixed reception in London, where it did not last through the season;

and that it was as much of a triumph in New York as a historical play is ever likely to be there. The London production was of the translation by Christopher Fry; the production in New York was of the adaptation by Lillian Hellman.

A quick survey of the critical receptions of the three main productions will show that the reasons for success or failure were most likely not in them. *L'Alouette* was first performed in Paris at the Théâtre Montparnasse Gaston Baty on October 14, 1953, with an excellent cast headed by Suzanne Flon as Joan, and remained for a long run. There is virtual unanimity in the praise bestowed upon the play as a fresh, thoughtful, and powerful retelling of the story "même après Shaw" as *France Soir* says. *Figaro* describes it as a faultless presentation of an exceptional work. Even *Figaro Littéraire*, the most highbrow of all, is very much taken with it and calls it the *Cyrano de Bergerac* of the half century, perhaps a somewhat left-handed compliment.

In London the play was first performed at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, on May 11, 1955. A brilliant revival of Shaw's *Saint Joan*, with Siobhan McKenna, was running at the same time and almost every reviewer succumbed to the temptation to compare the two plays. With Dorothy Tutin in the title role and Peter Brook as director *The Lark* had considerable assets of its own. The critical reception, however, was not favorable. The *Daily Express*, not one of the more literary papers, can be quoted as a kind of consensus of critical opinion: it finds a strong cast and brilliant direction. "Big guns on Tutin's side. But this stage duel of the actresses ends in complete victory for McKenna—and Shaw." National feelings aside, it is still the opposite of the view taken in Paris.

Finally, New York, Longacre Theatre, November 17, 1955. Julie Harris is Joan, Boris Karloff is Cauchon, Christopher Plummer the Earl of Warwick, as strong a cast as any, and a great success. The play lasted the whole season, went on tour, and was done on television. Brooks Atkinson spotted the main difference and Walter Kerr the main reason for it in their respective reviews. Atkinson wrote in the *New York Times*:

This is the drama that seemed no more than an intellectual attitude in Christopher Fry's adaptation in London last Spring. It is still basically intellectual, the work of a French dramatist who likes to reason his way through a sacred mystery. But Lillian Hellman's adaptation has solid strength in the theater.

And Kerr said in the *New York Herald Tribune*:

It has remained for a woman dramatist to give us the first really tough minded Joan of Arc. Lillian Hellman is, of course, only the adapter of Jean Anouilh's "The Lark." But that "only" may be misleading. I have a strong suspicion that a great deal of the biting briskness, the cleaver-sharp determination, the haughty hard-

headed candor of this Joan comes from the pen of the Lady who carved out, and carved up, "The Little Foxes."

It is safe to conclude that the differences in critical receptions were not due primarily to the productions which *The Lark* was given. This paper will try to show that the superiority of the Hellman adaptation over the Fry translation is due precisely to the fact that it was an adaptation. Miss Hellman took cognizance of the differences in traditions and expectations that separate the audiences of Paris from those of New York. Mr. Fry did not do the same for his London public.

I

Unlike Shaw, Anouilh does not retell the story of Joan in chronological order. His one and only scene is the trial of Joan, which takes place on a fairly bare stage with a neutral setting consisting mainly of several shallow levels. With the trial as his home base, Anouilh takes the characters back in time to re-enact the high points of Joan's life: her departure from home, her agreement with Squire Beaudricourt to send her to the Dauphin at Chinon, her appearance there, and her success in persuading the prince to let her lead the army at Orleans. The play then moves through the trial itself, her defense, her recantation and her denial of it, and finally her execution. But there remained one scene not acted out before—so the play ends, not with her burning, but with the high point of her career, the coronation of the Dauphin at Rheims as King Charles VII.

All these scenes occur in the same place, using only a few props—a throne, a stool, a few faggots—to indicate the particular setting. Most characters are present on stage at all times, and move in and out of the various situations with little éclat. All these details are basically the same in all three versions. Yet whereas Fry adheres closely to Anouilh's directions, Hellman departs from them in ways that are often as subtle as they are significant.

The main change in dramatic technique from Anouilh and Fry to Hellman seems slight at first, but it pervades and modifies the whole play. As the brief synopsis shows, the play relies on a system which we generally call the flashback and know from the film and a few plays like Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The flashback as we know it takes us from the present back to a previous event, a previous reality; it serves the elucidation of character or some other purpose of exposition. The French flashback, which Anouilh, Sartre and Giraudoux have used to varying degrees before, is not the same at all in technique or purpose. Rather it is a mélange of idea and reality, an often confusing mingling of materials symbolic of past and present, an elusive allusiveness to historical, political, cultural events. It serves character and plot less than the erection of those edifices of historical parallels, cultural

undertones and social *double-entendres* which the modern French drama uses extensively (as, for example, in the various modern versions of classic drama). It is therefore not so much a change of scene, like the American type, but a change of character; not exposition, but sophistication. In the American flashback, a character may jump in and out of a scene at the drop of a spotlight. In the French equivalent, he may not only jump out of a scene, but, as a character, out of the whole play—and without benefit of lighting.

This is the most important change in dramatic technique. The others are simpler: compared to the French, the English and American stage has always been more used to physical action and the direct clash of personalities. At the same time, it nowadays prefers fewer words, particularly of the introspective kind. Both of these traditions assist Miss Hellman in heightening dramatic contrasts and other effects at various times—at least in American eyes; but they also lead to a decrease in the subtlety and individuality of characters; Miss Hellman makes type do for individual in some places.

The main transmutation in the less easily definable area of national characteristics is an expected one: various problems connected with sex undergo a great change. But the results are perhaps unexpected. Miss Hellman does not tone things down—Mr. Fry does—but generally substitutes profanity for the more graphically descriptive statements of the original. The other important change concerns religion; here Miss Hellman does tone down some of the anticlericalism of the original. Besides these there are some minor aspects, such as the problems connected with protocol and etiquette, which she has to deal with.

Before I give detailed examples I ought to explain that I shall use the Fry translation whenever it is close enough to the original to point up the contrast to the Hellman version. The original will be referred to only when Fry differs from it.

II

Two aspects which are important in an analysis of the differences in dramatic technique become apparent in the opening stage directions. In keeping with the film tradition of the flashback Miss Hellman utilizes music to a much greater extent than the original and Fry's translation, which contain short bits of music on only a few occasions. The music for the Hellman version is extensive. It was composed by Leonard Bernstein, and is mostly sung by an a cappella choir of seven voices with counter tenor; it is of a liturgical nature, except for a few dances and a marching song, and anyone who heard it in the performance can testify that it was effective in heightening the impact of the play. It does, however, also impart the quality of a pageant to it, which the original does not have. Secondly, Anouilh's stage directions demand

a neutral décor in which such later props as the throne of the Dauphin are present from the beginning. Miss Hellman has a cyclorama on which projections are thrown to indicate the change from trial to flashback. The throne appropriately marches on and off stage in darkness. She thereby reinforces the distinction in time and place which the American flashback demands.

A simple example of the difference between Anouilh's and Hellman's concept of the flashback comes early in the play: the Squire Beaudricourt, a high-class yokel whom Joan talks out of a horse and armor later on, appears twice, and too early, happily ready to enter "his" scene, and is indignantly shushed by the others, only to forget to come when his entrance is actually called for. Miss Hellman omits all this. But to make up for it, and for the characterization it implies, she lets him be obviously more gullible during his scene with Joan.

Here is a different example, later in the play: at the end of a speech Joan, looking for corroboration, simply says:

Pas vrai, La Hire?

and her old general suddenly appears, the rest is plunged in shadows, and her scene with him gets under way. Both Fry and Hellman translate this line:

Isn't that true, La Hire?

With Anouilh, as with Fry, La Hire answers:

You bet it's true

and the scene proceeds. Hellman's Joan, on the other hand, stumbles after her question, moves away from the judges and falls to the ground as if exhausted. La Hire is heard in the distance whistling a song, comes on stage and says, as if to wake her up:

The morning has come, Madame Joan.

So the scene has a more pronounced break between the trial and the flashback.

The second major modification of dramatic technique concerns action on the stage, as I have said. Traditionally many things are told in the French drama which would be acted out on the English stage. So King Charles, for instance, tells of an adventure with La Tremouille, who commands his army (Fry translation):

That fat pig La Tremouille was in a raging temper the other day, and drew his sword on me. We were alone together: nobody there to defend me. He was quite prepared to give me a jab with it, the beastly hooligan! I only just had time to dodge behind the throne.

Hellman omits this speech, but inserts an earlier scene in which La Tremouille and the Archbishop interrupt a frivolous discussion about hats between Charles, his wife, and his mistress, and proceed to frighten and insult Charles thoroughly in front of them. This visual fact, and our knowledge that we cannot much trust Charles' words in any case, make this scene much stronger.

Altogether these two chief officers of the realm display a bluntness and discourtesy towards their supposed monarch which the French and English, more conscious of etiquette and decorum in such matters, would find quite false. Hellman is always blunter than the original to make the same point. At the start of Charles' first scene with Joan, the Archbishop suavely suggests that he will put the case to the Council, which will issue a report in due course. He invites Joan to go with him for now:

Venez, ma fille.

At that point the king stops him and orders the court to leave the hall. In Miss Hellman's version La Tremouille cuts off the Archbishop's speech and says to Charles:

LA TREMOUILLE. And will keep you informed of our decision. Go back to your book. She will not disturb you any more today. Come, Madame Henriette.

JOAN. My name is Joan.

LA TREMOUILLE. Forgive me. The last quack was called Henriette.

Only then the Archbishop says:

Come, my child

and the scene proceeds.

With the Inquisitor Miss Hellman had to solve another problem. His part is the most severely cut of all, partly to speed up the action, partly for reasons discussed below in another context. But his defeat by Joan—not her reluctant condemnation by Cauchon and the judges—his defeat by Joan is central to the meaning of the play. His importance has therefore to be established. Near the beginning of the play Joan has said some things which the Promoter (prosecutor) finds terrible. Then

THE INQUISITOR *has risen. He is an intelligent man, spare and hard, speaking with great quietness.*

INQUISITOR. Listen carefully to what I am going to ask you, Joan. Do you think you are in a state of grace at this moment?

Joan tries to evade the question while the court sits in silent expectation of her answer. Brother Ladvenu, her chief defender, interrupts the

Inquisitor, who, however, cannot be deflected from his purpose. After he has asked the fatal question of her for a third time, Joan answers:

JOAN. If I am not, may God in His goodness set me there. If I am, may God in His goodness keep me so.

The PRIESTS murmur. The INQUISITOR sits again, inscrutable.

LADVENU (*quietly*). Well answered, Joan.

Hellman injects additional drama into the scene.

THE INQUISITOR *risés*. THE PROMOTER *stops speaking*. *The stage is silent.* LADVENU, a young priest, rises and goes to THE INQUISITOR. THE INQUISITOR *whispers to him*. LADVENU *moves to CAUCHON, whispers to him*.

CAUCHON (*looks toward THE INQUISITOR; very hesitant*). Messire— (THE INQUISITOR *stares at CAUCHON*. CAUCHON *hesitates, then turns toward JOAN*) Joan, listen well to what I must ask you. At this moment, are you in a State of Grace?

Ladvenu immediately intervenes to protect Joan. Cauchon merely repeats his question:

CAUCHON. Are you in a State of Grace?

Joan evades the question in the same way as in the original, but Cauchon continues:

CAUCHON (*softly, worried*). Messire demands an answer. His reasons must be grave. Joan are you in a State of Grace?

Again the question has been asked three times, Joan answers it as in the original, and the scene is over. The Inquisitor has not said one word. In this way Miss Hellman increases his stature and our anticipation of the time when he will finally speak. When he does so in the end she will change and modify his words, too, more than those of any other character in the play. But that involves us with the most complicated aspect of the second area of changes, the one concerned with national attitudes. And before going into it, it may be better to take up its simpler aspects.

III

Anouilh directs that all characters remain on stage throughout the play, though in the background when they are not needed. He states specifically that Joan's mother is to knit throughout the evening. Both Fry and Hellman leave the placement of the cast more up to the director and omit the knitting instruction (though Fry has it in the mother's scene with Joan). An Anglo-Saxon audience, not aware of the almost ritual connection of the knitting women with the French Revolution

and the guillotine, would find the constant action a needless impediment.

Generally, however, Fry adheres to the original in matters of national characteristics. Anouilh prescribes that the Earl of Warwick, who introduces the play, carry a rose in his hand, which he smells occasionally. To the French audience this would perhaps indicate a somewhat un-English refinement in the Earl; an amusing attempt at imitation of the cultivated tastes of his French subjects; a reminder, like others in the play, of the civilizing influence which the French assume they have upon their various invaders. But to an American audience the rose would be an unpleasant effeminacy, which would likely prejudice it against the Earl. Fry, in retaining the rose, may well have created such a negative effect. Hellman disregards it.

In no respect do the shifts between the different versions reflect national tastes more clearly than in matters related to sex. For example, in one scene the Promoter is carried away by his subconscious, as he often is; he describes the Devil, trying to convince Joan that he need not appear as a monster, because he is clever enough to know how to tempt his victims in many ways:

En réalité le diable choisit la nuit la plus douce, la plus lumineuse, la plus embaumée, la plus trompeuse de l'année. . . . Il prend les traits d'une belle fille toute nue, les seins dressés, insupportablement belle

Fry, not at his luckiest, renders this as:

I tell you he chooses a moonlit summer night, and comes with coaxing hands, with eyes that receive you into them like water that drowns you, with naked women's flesh, transparent, white, . . . beautiful —

And Hellman:

In real life the Devil waits for a soft, sweet night of summer. Then he comes on a gentle wind in the form of a beautiful girl with bare breasts —

At which point the Promoter is unfortunately interrupted by the Bishop in each version—but not before we have had a glimpse at least of the transformation which each of the English versions makes: Fry veers toward the beau ideal of the English, Hellman towards the pin-up girl.

Virginity and virility are important topics to Anouilh, basic to the struggle which each thinking human being has to wage with himself and with others in order to achieve some meaningful kind of existence. His presentation of them is remarkably consistent in his plays: The actual situation always has serious and thought-provoking implications, but the treatment, and the circumstances in which the problem is brought up, are generally farcical. The Hellman version tones down

that levity and often omits the references altogether. So she omits a long discourse on the subject made by Warwick in comparing Joan to his future countess. All references to Charles' possible homosexuality are also omitted. Fry correctly translates Charles' answer to the request that he see Joan:

I don't like virgins. I know, you're going to tell me that I'm not virile enough. But they frighten me.

In New York he simply says:

You know La Tremouille would never allow me to see the girl. But the neatest example of national attitude may well be this: Charles is talking to Joan:

Tu sais que c'est à cause de mes jambes qu'Agnès ne m'aimera jamais?

Fry tones down the rational finality of the future tense:

It's because of my legs that Agnes can't bring herself to love me. And Miss Hellman makes it:

It's because of my legs that Agnes can never really love me. That "really" is, I suppose, a concession to the great American dream that such a relationship is not possible without at least a little love. When Joan tells her father about talking to St. Michael, he suspects a contact of quite another sort, and not with a saint; he beats and abuses her. Among other things he says to her:

Et quand tu nous reviendras le ventre gonflé, ayant deshonoré le nom de ton père, tué ta mère de douleur, et forcé tes frères à s'engager dans l'armée pour fuir la honte au village —ce sera le Saint-Esprit, peut-être, qui aura fait le coup!

Fry retains the idea but, as so often, tones down the language:

And when you can't hide your sinning any longer, and every day it grows bigger for all to see, and you've killed your mother with grief, and your brothers have to join the army to get away from the scandal in the village, it will be the Holy Ghost who brought it on us, I suppose?

Miss Hellman cuts the scene greatly, like many others, and substitutes stronger language, including some picturesque oaths, for the more explicit statements of the original:

You want to start whoring like the others. Well, you can tell your Blessed Saint Michael that if I catch you together I'll plunge my pitchfork into his belly and strangle you with my bare hands for the filthy rutting cat you are.

Pregnancy is not referred to.

Anouilh is outspoken and matter-of-fact. Sex is among the most important aspects of the conduct of life; and what could be more serious—and more comical—than life? Fry often transforms the necessary spade into an agricultural implement. Miss Hellman also merely implies some of the things Anouilh states directly. But her implication has the virtue, if I may call it that, of providing an emotional equivalent of the original.

It is outside my province to discuss the main differences in religious attitude between France and America. But a few examples from *The Lark* give insight into certain aspects as Miss Hellman took them into consideration. She handles the subject with great care and forbearance, especially when it concerns Catholicism (or at least can be construed to concern it). She avoids the embarrassment, for example, that Anouilh might cause early in the play when Joan tells of her "voices." His Joan actually repeats what the Archangel Michael and others told her and imitates a man's voice in carrying on both sides of the conversation. Miss Hellman keeps it a one-way conversation in which Joan looks towards the sky, listens to an unheard voice, and replies to it.

The main impact of the changes in the sphere of religion, however, is not of this kind. It chiefly concerns the Inquisitor, as mentioned before. His theology is less complex in the Hellman adaptation, and his religious views are softened. His dialectic paradoxes are muted so as not to be misunderstood or misconstrued and give offense thereby. Most of the not untypical anticlericalism of Anouilh and Fry disappears. One passage, in the Fry translation, will suffice to show this.

INQUISITOR. Ah, my Masters! How quickly your hearts can be melted. The accused has only to be a little girl, looking at you with a pair of wide-open eyes, and with a ha'porth of simple kindness, and you're all ready to fall over yourselves to absolve her. Very good guardians of the faith we have here! I see that the Holy Inquisition has enough to occupy it still: and still so much has to be cut away, cut, cut, always the dead wood to be cut away: and after us, others will go on, still pruning, hacking away without mercy, clearing the ranks of unruliness, so that the forest will be sound from root to branch.

A pause, and then LADVENU replies.

LADVENU. Our Saviour also loved with this loving-kindness, my lord. He said: Suffer the little children to come unto me. He put His hand on the shoulder of the woman taken in adultery, and said to her: Go in peace.

INQUISITOR. I tell you to be silent, Brother Ladvenu. Otherwise I shall have to investigate your case as well as Joan's. Lessons from the Gospels are read to the congregations, and we ask the parish priests to explain them. But we have not translated them into the vulgar tongue, or put them into every hand to make of them what they will. How mischievous that would be, to leave untutored

souls to let their imaginations play with the texts which only we should interpret. (*He quietens down.*) You are young, Brother Ladvenu, and you have a young man's generosity. But you must not suppose that youth and generosity find grace in the eyes of the faith's defenders. Those are the transitory ills which experience will cure. I see that we should have considered your age, and not your learning which I believe is remarkable, before we invited you to join us here. Experience will soon make plain to you that youth, generosity, human tenderness are names of the enemy. At least, I trust it may. Surely you can see, if we were so unwise as to put these words you have spoken into the hands of simple people, they would draw from them a love of Man. And love of Man excludes love of God.

I have quoted the passage in full to exemplify also the cuts in the Hellman version which follows. But the actual changes are really more important:

INQUISITOR. Ah, my masters. What strange matters concern you all. Your business is to defend the Faith. But you see the kind eyes of a young girl and you are overwhelmed.

LADVENU. Our Lord loved charity and kindness, Messire. He said to a sinner, "Go in peace." He said—

INQUISITOR. Silence, I said to you, Brother Ladvenu. (*Softly, carefully*). You are young. I am told your learning is very great and that is why you were admitted to this trial. Therefore I am hopeful that experience will teach you not to translate the great words into the vulgar tongue, nor embroider the meaning to suit your heart. Be seated and be silent. (*He turns back to JOAN.*) You were very young when you first heard your Voices.

JOAN. Yes, Messire.

INQUISITOR. I am going to shock you: there is nothing very exceptional about the Voices you heard in those days. Our archives are full of such cases. There are many young visionaries. Girls frequently experience a crisis of mysticism. It passes. But with you—and your priest should have recognized it—the crisis was prolonged. The messages became precise and the Celestial Voices began to use most unusual words.

In the American version child psychology and statistical evidence replace dialectic and paradox; a much more modern Inquisitor, he. It is not surprising that Miss Hellman omits his bitterness and unconscious irony after Joan's recantation, which make him pray:

Will you never grant, O Lord, that this world should be unburdened of every trace of humanity, so that at last we may in peace consecrate it to Thy glory alone?

IV

The end of the play differs in all three versions, as if each writer felt that the proper effect needed to be achieved by different scenes.

With regard to the burning at the stake, the original and Frye are close. Joan is dragged to the stake by the executioner followed by a howling mob. "The movement is rapid and brutal." The whole action is "rapid, hurly-burly, improvised, like a police operation." The Inquisitor storms about almost hysterically trying to hurry the execution and experiencing all the time his impending defeat by Joan. In the flames Joan "murmuring, already twisted with pain" speaks her last words, and then the prayer for the dead drowns the voices.

This is Hellman's version:

(The music of the "Sanctus" begins as the JUDGES, CAUCHON, THE INQUISITOR, THE PROMOTER, CHARLES, the PEOPLE OF THE COURT, return to the stage. Two SOLDIERS bring a crude stake. JOAN herself moves to the stake and the SOLDIERS lash her to it. Other SOLDIERS and VILLAGE WOMEN pick up the bundles of faggots and carry them off stage. The EXECUTIONER appears with a lighted torch and moves through the crowd.)

Then after only a few words:

(JOAN is carried off stage. The lights dim and we see the flames—or the shadows of flames—as they are projected on the cyclo-rama . . .)

Cauchon starts the prayer for the dead.

The Inquisitor does not sense his defeat; he is merely saddened by the futility of it all:

THE INQUISITOR (*Moves off*). I have seen it all before.

Hellman produces a pageant, not a police action, an ascent to heaven, not the execution of a mortal girl. Her concept here is "filmic," one might say De Millean.

But the play does not end here. In the original and the Fry version, Beaudricourt runs in at this point and stops all. He demands that the coronation of Charles be enacted, the only part of Joan's story not yet shown. All agree—the Earl of Warwick not very graciously—and Charles has a last speech which ends:

. . . it isn't the painful and miserable end of the cornered animal caught at Rouen: but the lark singing in the open sky. Joan at Rheims in all her glory. The true end of the story is a kind of joy. Joan of Arc: a story which ends happily.

Fry assigns this last speech to Cauchon, who is a more dignified man and does not have to step out of his previous character to pronounce that epitaph. With Fry the rest is action, not words, but Anouilh is not quite done. There are a few banal words by Beaudricourt, and the final speech belongs to Joan's father. As he helps to remove the faggots, he talks to his son:

Avance, toi. Et tire tes doigts de ton nez! Prends modèle sur ta soeur! Regarde comme elle est à l'honneur, qu'on se sent fier d'être son père! . . . J'avais toujours dit, moi, que cette petite avait de l'avenir . . .

Then Anouilh—and Fry—conclude: an altar is improvised, the procession forms to approach it, with Charles and Joan at its head. All kneel as the Archbishop crowns Charles, except Joan, who "remains standing, leaning on her standard, smiling upward, like a statue of her." And so "the curtain falls slowly on this beautiful illustration from a school prize."

Hellman differs greatly. It is not the dumb Beaudricourt but the brave La Hire "In full armor, holding helmet and sword" who interrupts the execution:

LA HIRE: You were fools to burn Joan of Arc.

The others agree and he adds:

LA HIRE: The true story of Joan is the story of her happiest day. Anybody with any sense knows that. Go back and act it out.

(The lights dim . . . and come up on the Coronation of CHARLES in Rheims Cathedral. The altar cloth is in place, the lighted candles are behind the altar, stained glass windows are projected on the cyclorama. The ARCHBISHOP appears, and the people of the royal court. JOAN stands clothed in a fine white robe, ornamented with fleur-de-lis.)

Warwick, coming unawares upon this scene, has his doubts that the coronation—

Holy oil being poured on this mean, sly little head

—could have been Joan's happiest day. Charles is amused at this, and replies:

CHARLES. Oh, I didn't turn out so bad. I drove you out of the country, and I got myself some money before I died. I was as good as most.

WARWICK. So you were. But certainly the girl would never have ridden into battle, never have been willing to die because you were as good as most.

JOAN. Oh, Warwick, I wasn't paying any attention to Charlie. I knew what Charlie was like. I wanted him crowned because I wanted my country back. And God gave it to us on this Coronation day. Let's end with it please, if nobody would mind.

As the curtain falls the chorus sings the "Gloria" of the Mass.

The three endings differ greatly and significantly. Anouilh, true to form, spun out to the last his acrobatic mixture of sophistication and studied anticlimax. Fry, with his slight cuts and changes, has dimin-

ished the irony of the original and thereby brought out the sentimentality implicit in the final scene. He substituted no effect of his own for the material he omitted.

Hellman has altered the original greatly. As with most of the play, she has simplified structure, characters and language, and has in the process removed much of the sophistication and originality of Anouilh's play. But the ending also shows again that she is somehow able to find, within her self-imposed limits, a rough equivalent of the author's intentions, one that will have an effect on her audience somewhat comparable to the effect of the original. She has worked it along the more orthodox lines of tears than of smiles. She has separated the coronation more fully from the preceding execution, and she has given it an atmosphere reminiscent of much contemporary American fiction, drama, and film: the sentimental element is implicit in the whole situation and its visual presentation, but not in the "tough," unsentimental words spoken by Warwick, Charles, and Joan. This effect is not far removed from that of Anouilh where the silly banalities of Charles, Beaudricourt, and the Father contrast with the (of course) rather ironical school prize picture of an ending. The only difference between Hellman and Anouilh is that the irony of that picture is omitted—it would not be very meaningful in New York. The final words are in both cases of the same hard-boiled school. If Miss Hellman lets the King, the Warrior, and the Maid have the final say, and ends with the Gloria, she does so merely because her whole adaptation has the quality of a pageant, which she knows must be rounded off with a climax of an emotional nature. And she knows also that in the American drama it is better in the end to settle on the side of furtive tears than to stray toward self-conscious smiles.

HENRY W. KNEPLER

THE DENOUEMENT OF *PYGMALION*

ALAN JAY LERNER, probably the most successful adapter of Shaw's *Pygmalion*, commented: "Shaw explains how Eliza ends not with Higgins but with Freddy and—Shaw and Heaven forgive me—I am not certain he is right."¹ Many critics would agree with this sentiment. A recent analysis of the play goes so far as to dismiss the Epilogue as a bit of Shavian frivolity and to cite the "happy ending" Shaw himself wrote for Pascal's film as the proper denouement of a play which is persuasively categorized by one critic as a play which follows "the classic pattern of satirical comedy."²

Such an ending has been popular also with audiences and actors ever since the play first appeared in 1913. Shaw chided both Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Beerbohm Tree for their romantic interpretations in the first productions: "I say, Tree, must you be so treacly?" he asked during the rehearsals. Tree's stage business before the curtain fell left no doubts in the minds of audiences that Higgins's marriage to Eliza was imminent. Justifying it, Tree wrote Shaw: "My ending makes money; You ought to be grateful." Shaw replied: "Your ending is damnable: You ought to be shot."³ And he continued fulminating against romantic portrayals of an ending which caters to what, in the Epilogue written for *Pygmalion* later, he called "imagination . . . so enfeebled by their lazy dependence on the ready-mades and reach-me-downs of the ragshop in which Romance keeps its stock of 'happy endings' to misfit all stories."

Nonetheless, the recurrent arousing of inappropriate audience expectations and the apparent inability of the play to arouse the appropriate expectations (or those which Shaw considered appropriate) raise a question about *Pygmalion's* success on the playwright's terms. Perhaps even more important, they call for a re-examination of these terms; for I think that the ending is significant and dramatically inevitable, and that it is the ending Shaw himself rewrote for the film (thereby confusing the matter further)—rather than his Epilogue—which is frivolous.

What, then, are the terms of *Pygmalion*?

The title of the play underlines the parallel of Shaw's story and the myth of the artist-life-giver. At the same time, however, there are differences between the two, the most obvious one being in the endings.

1. *My Fair Lady* (New York, 1956), Prefatory Note.

2. Milton Crane, "Pygmalion: Bernard Shaw's Dramatic Theory and Practice," *PMLA*, 66 (1951), 882-3.

3. Hesketh Pearson, *Beerbohm Tree, His Life and Laughter* (London, 1956), pp. 179, 182.

Pygmalion's ardent wish, as is well known, is miraculously granted. The romance, in the erotic sense, is consummated, presumably in the time-worn fashion of the rag shop. It is relevant here only to note that this consummation is anticipated throughout the myth: Pygmalion ardently yearns for it all along.

A second difference between the play and the myth is perhaps less obvious. While the heroes of both are artists, Higgins, in the framework of Shaw's philosophy, is the greater one. "Artist-philosophers are the only sort of artists I take quite seriously," Shaw remarked in the Epistle Dedicatory to *Man and Superman*, and he frequently voiced his belief that art must be didactic, that in fact art by its very nature is didactic and can never be anything else. (Significantly, he makes the point again in the Preface to *Pygmalion*.) Pygmalion's artistry, the creation of a beautiful statue, evokes, in the artist himself, a passion of the senses. Higgins's artistry and passion, on the other hand, are cerebral: didactic and philosophic, phonetics and Milton.

While the comparison of the myth and the play could be pursued further—such matters as the use of a *deus ex machina* and the complete passivity of Galatea, for example, clearly contrast with Shaw's treatment—it is evident that Shaw's title appears to be almost ironic, for, according to his own standards, his plot (didactic and philosophic rather than erotic and sentimental) is artistically superior. In writing *Pygmalion*, however, Shaw was not primarily concerned with demonstrating his superiority as a myth-maker, and the title was not chosen for purposes of irony. He chose the title, I think, because his play and the myth had one basic thing in common which he wished to underline: both are stories of the creation of human life.

That Higgins did not consider Eliza human at first he hardly takes any pains to disguise. His expressions of contempt for her in the first two acts are as shocking to Pickering and Mrs. Pearce as they are amusing to the audience. "This creature with her kerbstone English," he says, "[has] no right to live." He refers to her as a "squashed cabbage leaf," "baggage," "draggletailed guttersnipe"—in short, as he himself says, an object which is "incapable of understanding anything."

Much later in the play he states his beliefs more explicitly if less amusingly. Describing her earlier life and the lives of the poor in general, he emphasizes their non-human, animal-like characteristics: "Work til you're more a brute than a human being; and then cuddle and squabble and drink til you fall asleep. Oh, it's a fine life, the life of the gutter. It's real: it's warm: it's violent: you can feel it through the thickest skin: you can taste it and smell it without any training or any work. Not like Science and Literature and Classical Music and Philosophy and Art."

It is a product of that subhuman environment which Higgins undertakes to transform into a "duchess." The process of the transformation

itself, however, does not constitute either the major theme or the major conflict of the play. Indeed, while both the motion picture and Lerner's *My Fair Lady* do, Shaw's play does not contain a single scene which illustrates this process.

What the play portrays is a conflict between Higgins and Eliza which is of a far greater magnitude. At first the antagonists appear unevenly matched. Higgins's verbal fluency and wit reduce Eliza to "crooning like a bilious pigeon," as Higgins puts it. The turning point begins, conventionally enough, at the midpoint of the play, at Mrs. Higgins's At-Home. Eliza by now has undergone considerable training in manners and speech and makes a decided hit. The play reaches a climax at her sensation-causing "not bloody likely" *faux pas*, which made *Pygmalion* such a *succès de scandale*.⁴ After this scene, as they become less unevenly matched, the conflict between Eliza and Higgins gains in intensity, although it loses some of its comic effect.

What is the nature of the conflict between them? In spite of the initial unevenness of the match, Eliza fights back in an outrage at Higgins's contempt for her—and is probably attracted to him at the same time. In any case, conforming to the aspirations of the poor, she wants to improve her economic lot. The conflict at this point arises because the two take very different views of the lessons: to Eliza they are a mutually advantageous commercial arrangement wherein Higgins is to get paid by her in order to teach her to talk properly to enable her to open a flower shop; to Higgins, on the other hand, the commercial and economic factors are simply nonexistent. Training her so as to pass her off as a duchess is an inspired folly done for the fun of it, a challenge because, as he says, "she's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty." Yet he meets this challenge in dead earnest, and with devastating consequences to the personality of Eliza.⁵ Both in a literal and a figurative sense Higgins and Eliza do not speak the same language.

The difference in their attitudes, particularly in the second act, naturally follows from the differences in their backgrounds and personalities. Eliza has the qualities of character—manifested in the "good ear and a quick tongue" Higgins hopes for when he decides to take her on—which enable her to rise out of her lowly origins. Nonetheless, her origins have left their stamp on her. Joan of Arc too came from modest circumstances, but Shaw's Joan was a genius. Eliza is only very gifted. She personifies the potential of a human being—perhaps any human being—given the proper guidance. But her primary wants are mundane: marriage and the security of an income, or, as she puts it, "Freddy loves me: that makes him king enough for me. . . . I'll go and be a teacher."

4. Magnificently changed to a more contemporary shocker in the Ascot scene of *My Fair Lady*.

5. In *Back to Methuselah*, it may be recalled, the She-Ancient comments to the Newly Born: "If we played with you we should play with your minds."

The tremendous gulf between her and Higgins, particularly in the last act, is not one of social class. Higgins, as a matter of fact, is throughout the play even less representative of his class than Eliza later is of the class she has left. His preoccupation is with phonetics. He appears, at first glimpse, to be two-dimensional precisely because of this preoccupation, which is juxtaposed with the personality of a spoiled child who lacks even a vestige of manners (as Mrs. Pearce points out in the second act and Mrs. Higgins thereafter) and who (as he cheerfully points out himself) is subject to an infantile mother fixation.

But this childish simplicity is misleading. "Childish" attributes in Shaw's protagonists are too often coupled with, if not the very trademarks of, his true heroes. One immediately thinks of Caesar's propensity to celebrate his birthday when the mood strikes him and to pout when he is reminded of the bald spot on his head, and of Joan's irreverence toward various dignitaries and her apparent naïveté in theology, politics, and war. So, on further observation, it is with Higgins. Like them, in some ways even like the Ancients in *Back to Methuselah* (who, however, are neither charming nor witty), Higgins is Shaw's ideal hero: "childish," unfeeling (unsentimental), almost devoid of any sense perception, particularly one relating to sex (Higgins comments on his mother fixation as blandly as Joan does on her breach-of-promise suit or Caesar on his age which protects him against Cleopatra's physical charms), witty, and preoccupied with intellectual or philosophical questions put to play in a particular problem usually not understood by the people around him.⁶

For Higgins is another protagonist of the *élan vital*, an ideal of human perfection which Shaw voices in Lilith's speech which concludes *Back to Methuselah*, the lengthiest and perhaps most explicit dramatic expression of Shaw's ideals: "redemption from the flesh, to the vortex freed from matter, to the whirlpool in pure intelligence." Higgins's particular enunciation of this force is manifested in his creation. He transforms an ignorant, filthy, poor flower girl into a lady who can be passed off as a duchess. But this transformation is clearly symbolic of more, just as proper enunciation is symbolic of the higher form of life Higgins has in mind when he calls English "the language of Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible."

So—beneath his bad manners, childish pouting, and limitless egotism—he views his actions, and the fact that his comments are amusing makes them no less significant and true than, say, the naïve formulation of Joan's comments. When Cauchon questions Joan about the truth of her vision: "And you, and not The Church, are to be the

6. A parallel with *Back to Methuselah* again comes to mind. The Ancients are described as being "without sexual charm, but intensely interesting and rather terrifying"; except for the first part, Eliza might well so describe Higgins.

judge?" and Joan exasperates the court by exclaiming: "What other judgment can I judge by but my own?" she neatly summarizes her own greatness, the more so since she herself is unaware of both the heresy and the genius of the simple remark. Higgins is more sophisticated but equally accurate when he neatly summarizes his creation when Eliza complains that he has made trouble for her by making her a lady: "Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? *Making life means making trouble*" (italics mine).

Higgins has created life itself. Eliza, coming from an environment which, save for its curious speech patterns, is, if at all human, sub-human, is made into a "duchess;" that is, into "a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech," as Higgins elsewhere describes civilized man.

Thus, while one of the most penetrating and suggestive of the analyses of Shaw's work accepts the original ending of *Pygmalion*, it seems to do so for the wrong reasons. I cannot agree with the assertion in that analysis that "the 'education of Eliza' in Acts I to III is a caricature of the true process." No educative process is in fact represented in the play (although Shaw inserted "a sample" for film production at a later date—a hint which was deftly developed in *My Fair Lady*). But more important, the conclusion that "Eliza turns the tables on Higgins, for she, finally, is the vital one, and ~~he is the prisoner of 'system,'~~ particularly of his profession," seems to me to miss the point.⁷

Rather the reverse is true. The magnificent comic subplot underlines the point, for Doolittle was once, like Higgins, outside of class or "system" and had vitality. Both Doolittle and Eliza are brought to join the middle class. What is sharply contrasted, however, is the consequence of the transformation: for Doolittle it is a descent while for Eliza it is an ascent—the transformation makes the previously articulate (vital) father comically impotent while it gives the previously inarticulate ("crooning like a bilious pigeon") daughter human life. In sum, Higgins, the life-giver, will continue his study of phonetics while Eliza will settle for the life her father describes so picturesquely in the last act when all the cards are put on the table. Higgins, that is, will continue to teach proper, *civilized* articulation, a superman attempting to transform subhumans into humans; while Eliza will lead an admirable if circumscribed middle-class existence, having been given humanity—life—by Higgins.

Her ability to undergo successfully such a transformation evidences her superior qualities and often makes her appear as the hero of the play. She is only a Shavian hero *manqué*, however, and she is not the

7. Eric Bentley, *Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950* (New York, 1957), p. 125. In a letter to the writer Mr. Bentley adds, to his well-known analysis of the play as one portraying "the standard conflict of vitality and system," that Shaw "seems to me to do here what he does in other plays, such as *Devil's Disciple*: inverting the romance that the audience expects. The Ibsen and Shaw theatre seems to me always anti-audience in such ways, tho Shaw is more of a flirt and can give the opposite impression."

wife for Higgins. She can not even understand him, their values and interests being so different. Higgins genuinely admires Eliza, although he is first shocked and then amused by her values: in a most effective and inevitable denouement, the curtain falls as "he roars with laughter"—at the thought of her marrying Freddy. Admirable as she now is—especially when compared with what she was when he met her—she is not, and never can be, his equal. She is now part and parcel of the system of "middle class morality" which the early Doolittle and Higgins find ludicrous. Higgins and Eliza, then, still do not speak the same language, although this is true now only in the figurative sense. This does not, however, preclude the existence of an affinity between them, perhaps one comparable to the one existing between Caesar and Cleopatra. Nevertheless, marrying Eliza would be preposterous for Higgins, a superman with the vitality of a soul and a "Miltonic mind" (as he himself labels it) who lives on an entirely different plane, a plane where sex and marriage, indeed, are unknown.

What causes audiences to wish for it (as Eliza herself, for that matter, was wishing for it) is the *Cinderella* guise of the plot—which buttresses audiences' perennial desires, as Shaw rightly said in the Epilogue, for the marriage of the hero and the maiden—and the sentimental part of the myth which the title incidentally also calls to mind. The *Cinderella* guise, however, is accidental and irrelevant; it is purposely negated by the omission of scenes depicting the process of the transformation and by the omission of the grand ball scene, the high-point of any *Cinderella* story. The title specifically and intentionally focuses attention away from the heroine and on Higgins, and on Higgins's life-giving qualities in particular.

It is very appropriate, therefore, that the most recent popular production is called *My Fair Lady*, focusing attention, as the musical itself does, on the *Cinderella* theme. At the same time, with all the brilliance of this version, even with the dialogue culled from the original play, this one is a very different play throughout. All the non-comic lines I have quoted are omitted, for in *My Fair Lady* Higgins is the conventional romantic hero and not what he surely is in *Pygmalion*: the Shavian hero, standing alone, a superman embodying a life force divorced from human social and sensual drives, but representative of the vitality and creative evolution in which, in Shaw's philosophy, lies the ultimate hope of mankind.

MYRON MATLAW

AN APPROACH TO TRAGEDY

I

THE ATTEMPTS TO EVALUATE WORKS OF LITERATURE as tragedy are often seriously hampered if not completely frustrated by difficulties in defining the tragic vein. While many essays and monographs offer discussions of a great number of literary compositions called tragedies, they do not provide a common denominator for them. In fact, scholars and critics generally fail to give us analyses that may be employed with complete confidence. Yet we all know that the works of literature which properly belong to the class of tragedy must have in common some quality or qualities by means of which they are distinguished from all other works of literature. We also realize that if we can isolate whatever is peculiar to tragedy we shall be in an excellent position to define the vein, and we shall then have far less trouble when we attempt to evaluate individual dramas.

In the present study we may be able to determine whether the fault lies in ourselves or in the subject matter, or perhaps in both. We shall devote our attention to three areas of investigation which are vital to a discussion of the tragic vein. First of all we shall examine the planes of reference employed by human beings in their thinking and utterance. We shall do this general task rather than endeavor to analyze particular metaphysical foundations—for example, those of Greece in the fifth century B.C., or those of Shakespeare's England—inasmuch as what we need to uncover is something that is common to all such foundations rather than peculiar to one. Second, we shall discuss the raw materials of tragedy, giving almost exclusive attention to the human being as a potential tragic figure. Third, we shall take more than a leaf out of Aristotle's *Poetics* in considering significant aspects of the tragic vein, for we shall examine such matters as setting, dramatic personae, plot, and the like.

In this procedure we shall doubtless fall into error, owing both to our own inadequacies and to those of the language which we use. It is to be hoped, however, that the errors will be those of detail rather than of methodology, for if we can establish a satisfactory approach to tragedy we should eventually be able to reduce to a minimum the errors of detail. Moreover, if we can agree on an approach, the constantly recurring difficulties should be lessened, and a significant definition of the tragic vein should emerge.

PLANES OF REFERENCE

Human thinking and utterance frequently appear to be wholly chaotic. Actually, however, this is more appearance than reality. No matter how disorganized our speaking seems to be, it almost always refers to different classes of human experience. We may say therefore that thinking and utterance employ directly or indirectly various planes of reference. These planes may be satisfactorily grouped under three headings: occurrence, fact, and nonfact.

Planes of Occurrence

There are two planes of occurrence. The one is determined by occurrences that may be called natural; the other, by those that may be called factitious.

The Plane of Natural Occurrence. Phenomena in themselves are assigned to the plane of occurrence which exists apart from man's creative imagination. It is convenient to refer to it as the plane of natural occurrence. Although we tend to speak of this plane as though it were readily defined and wholly within our grasp, we learn that it is essentially indeterminable. Only through the human perspective of sensation-consciousness do we become aware of natural occurrence, and this perspective is by no means foolproof. Indeed, we eventually discover that it is of definitely limited range and of doubtful accuracy. Moreover, we find that we know nothing of its general validity. Like a geometry, our perspective may be no more than one among a number of possibilities; unlike a geometry, it is the only one we have. We are thus not necessarily reassured that our perspective is reliable just because everything may come out right; we know too well that systematization may mean nothing more than that the axioms, principles, methods, and data employed are sufficient unto themselves and compatible in association. Furthermore we realize that our perspective can never be entirely adequate for the task we have undertaken. Like all instruments sensation-consciousness is the means to remarkable accomplishments; like them it also functions within definite limits. As a result we find ourselves in no position to assert that the plane of natural occurrence can be defined. On the contrary, we feel compelled to admit that the plane of natural occurrence is essentially indeterminable.

The Plane of Factitious Occurrence. The pseudo-phenomena which are figments of the human mind, whether created deliberately or unawaredly, make up the plane of factitious occurrence. Human law, for example, creates bodies (corporations) that do not exist in the plane of natural occurrence, experimenters in science set up hypothetical occurrences in an endeavor to find a means to explain natural occurrences, and artists create their own worlds. Moreover our language—something that does not exist by itself in the plane of natural

occurrence—constantly leads us into creating the factitious, often without our having any sharp realization of what we are doing. Theoretically it should be possible clearly to define the plane of factitious occurrence. Actually, however, men do not always distinguish carefully between the natural and the factitious, and sometimes find it impossible to do so. Thus we are brought to the conclusion that the plane of factitious occurrence can be but partially defined.

The Planes of Fact

The concept of "fact" is most troublesome. A philosopher states that "fact" is "one of the great undefined and possibly indefinable terms in the vocabulary of rational animals."¹ If we are to proceed with this study we are compelled to offer a definition of "fact," even though such action threatens to place us among those precipitate creatures who are not deterred by the fears of angels. First, we should eliminate the confusing of fact with occurrence. The two are not identical, inasmuch as the former functions as a reference to the latter. Second, we shall put our reliance on language usage by stating that fact may be defined as an accurate, nonqualitative verbal reference to occurrence. We shall discuss only limited aspects of fact; to wit, ascertainable and assumed fact, and subjective and objective facts. The use of the term "fact" in relation to generalizations and to negatives is presently not essential to our study.

Ascertainable and Assumed Fact. Theoretically it should be possible to establish two planes of ascertainable fact: the first, on the basis of the aspects of natural occurrence which can be grasped in the human perspective of sensation-consciousness; the second, on the basis of factitious occurrence. The first would not be a plane of the totality of natural occurrence, nor simply the totality of reported fact; it would be a plane including the whole range of possibility in accurate, nonqualitative verbal references to occurrence. What is theoretically ascertainable, however, is without doubt only part of that which exists in the plane of occurrence, and this circumstance brings us to an impasse in our thinking—we have little or no possibility of determining which is the more important, that which we probably know or that which we certainly do not know. Equally disturbing is the realization that the difficulties of establishing the plane of natural occurrence precipitate similar difficulties for the plane of ascertainable fact. So we are forced seriously to consider the probability that we cannot define the plane of ascertainable fact.

We are at first loath to concede the necessity for any such consideration, for in the enterprise of practical living we are convinced that we do establish fact. Not only do we distinguish between the living and the dead, the large and the small, the present and the absent, and the

1. Alburey Castell, *An Elementary Ethics* (New York, 1954), p. 146.

like, but we also successfully carry on vast and complicated technological processes. Certainly for many practical purposes we are in touch with natural occurrence and we have grasped ascertainable fact. The crucial tests come, however, in our search for the totality of a given occurrence and for its essence. A study in any field of science reveals that such a search cannot be completed; there is always something which we cannot grasp or understand. Furthermore so much is in dispute that often we are presented with opposing sets of data which are offered as fact and vigorously supported by different groups of recognized authorities. Thus, whether or not we are experts in scientific enterprise, we should realize that we may accurately refer only to the planes of assumed fact, and these planes may or may not be identical with the theoretical plane of ascertainable fact, which is determined by natural occurrence.

When we consider the plane of ascertainable fact based on factitious occurrence, we note that the former is controlled by the latter. A partial plotting of the plane of factitious occurrence patently can yield nothing more than a partial grasp of ascertainable fact dependent thereon.

Subjective and Objective Facts. If fact is a verbal reference either to natural occurrence as apprehended in the perspective of sensation-consciousness, or to factitious occurrence, it follows that all fact is necessarily subjective in origin. What we call objective fact is the product of reducible subjectivity; that is, we can change subjectivity from its total private form to a partial public form when it is possible to set up agreements about phenomena that are external to the cognizing agent or can be reported as external. What we call subjective fact is the product of irreducible subjectivity; that is, since the reference is to a completely private phenomenon—something that cannot be examined independently by various persons because it is essentially insusceptible of externalization—the subjective quality or character cannot be altered. The common tendency is to dismiss the irreducible subjectivity and to be concerned exclusively with the reducible, for then there is some hope of giving order to the available data. Yet, no matter how convenient it may be to construct systems of objective facts, no matter how difficult or impossible it may be to construct acceptable systems exploiting subjective facts, we cannot eradicate the facts of irreducible subjectivity simply by ignoring them or by dismissing them as emotional reactions. Indeed, even the probability of total error in reporting the phenomena of irreducible subjectivity does not mean that there are no facts; it means that we have no way of publicly verifying that which may be reported as fact. Thus, regardless of personal predilections for and general satisfaction with well-rounded systems of thought, we always face two categories of fact, those of an irreducible as well as those of a reducible subjectivity.

The Planes of Nonfact

Fact, as we have said, is an accurate nonqualitative verbal reference to occurrence. Nonfact, however, is either a qualitative or a nonqualitative treatment of occurrence and fact. As there is not just a single plane of fact but actually a family of planes, so there are many planes of nonfact. We have, for example, in the nonqualitative planes of nonfact such instruments as logic and mathematics which presumably are formal means of treating occurrence and fact. They are employed in an attempt to provide a wholly dehumanized, static order of facts, and they are of particular value to the scientist who endeavors to lay bare the plane of occurrence as it would be if wholly dissociated from men as cognizing agents.² In the qualitative planes of nonfact, on the other hand, we have instruments like rhythm and the experiential extrapolations arrived at without conscious deployment of data. These are indispensable to artist, ethicist, historian, theologian, and metascientific philosopher, because they provide a unified, humanized, and fluid presentation of both reducible and irreducible subjectivity.³ Indeed, all the qualitative planes of nonfact are necessarily rooted in that which is characteristic solely of human beings; hence they always treat occurrence and fact according as they have or may have significance for man as a sentient, emotional, and more or less rational creature. In the nonqualitative planes of nonfact, man as scientist struggles to exclude himself from the field under observation so that he may attain his ideal of representing a completely dehumanized plane of occurrence, one to which the cognizing agent adds nothing and from which he takes nothing. In the qualitative planes of nonfact, man tries greatly to extend his reach by including himself in the field of observation, and in doing so he inevitably humanizes phenomena, making them other than what they are when considered apart from men.

It should be clear that unless we go beyond fact to nonfact we face a chaos of data, if indeed we can even recognize data. The different systems of mathematics and logic are nonfact means of creating order out of the array of assumed facts derived from both natural and factitious occurrence. These planes of reference in nonfact theoretically do not alter the facts; they function purely in arranging and classifying assumed facts. Yet this remarkable capacity of mathematics and logic reveals an important limitation. The world of assumed fact may be put into systematized form, but it remains a world without human significance. That is, deliberately dehumanized as they must be to serve purely in an instrumental capacity, mathematics and logic create an ordered but relatively meaningless world for men. It is thus not in the

2. See Erwin Schrödinger, "Nature and the Greeks," in *What Is Life & Other Scientific Essays* (Garden City, N. Y., 1956). See also J. Arthur Thomson, "Science and Modern Thought," in *The Outline of Science*, ed. J. Arthur Thomson (New York, 1937), pp. 1165-1181.

3. But see José Ortega y Gasset, "The Dehumanization of Art," in *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Writings on Art and Culture* (Garden City, N. Y., 1956).

nonqualitative planes of either fact or nonfact but in the qualitative planes of nonfact that men relate the universe to themselves. They make judgments, they assign values and meanings to phenomena, and they add to the natural world a multitude of factitious occurrences. Men do this because they are not content to regard themselves as mere molecular aggregates among countless other molecular aggregates; they insist on regarding themselves in their complete humanity—protoplasm and cerebration as well as molecularity. It is through their cerebration that men give the world human significance, for through their creative minds they set up planes of nonfact that transform for men both occurrence and fact.

In the process of giving human significance to the world, men have created and developed institutions and enterprises like language, communal life, religion, education, and art; and, as they have grown in awareness of themselves and the environment in which they must live, men have also learned to systematize their thinking by means of mathematical and philosophical disciplines. As figments of the human mind all the above are, in their "occurential" nature, factitious. That they treat natural occurrence and also give rise to natural occurrence does not in the least alter their factitious origins and character. It is obvious that these nonfact developments are fluid and indefinite, and therefore protean. The result is that the variations in form are almost innumerable. Consider, for example, language. At the present time there are between twenty-five hundred and thirty-five hundred living and dead languages,⁴ and these by no means set limits to language forms. Moreover, since language is a repository of human experience, every living tongue is constantly becoming other than what it recently was. It takes up experiences, "digests" them; thereafter neither the language nor the experiences are what they were earlier. Similarly there are many different modes of communal life, religion, education, art, and philosophy. In other words, whereas the planes of assumed fact competing for recognition as ascertainable fact are relatively few, the planes of nonfact are legion. Moreover, while the planes of assumed fact, to have scientific validity, must be based on and limited to reducible subjectivity based on natural occurrence, the qualitative planes of nonfact not only freely exploit facts from both reducible and irreducible subjectivity but also create and cultivate factitious occurrence.

Though some of them may be ascribed to supernatural or other mysterious forces, the planes of nonfact are, as far as we now can comprehend them, all products of man's creative mind.⁵ Presumably they have been produced very gradually, and they are indicative of man's efforts

4. Louis H. Gray, *Foundations of Language* (New York, 1950), p. 418. Gray considers the "estimate so rough as to be practically worthless." Joshua Whatmough puts the number at about 3,000. See his *Language, a Modern Synthesis* (New York, 1957), p. 55.

5. Planes of assumed fact are likewise products of man's creative mind, though they are treated as though derived directly from the plane of occurrence.

not only to make himself at home in the universe but also to possess it. Thus, despite evidence to the contrary, man has insisted in one way or another that life is worth while. Moreover, no matter how often he has changed his mind or how inconsistent he has been, man has also been convinced that there are better ways of living and worse ways. To cap it all, he has been certain that he can give significant meaning to the endless flux and reflux of atomic stuff, both human and nonhuman. If there are no judgments, values, and meanings inherent in the universe, man has made up his mind to supply the deficiency.

In the treatment of occurrence and fact the qualitative planes of nonfact often assume such importance that men tend to lose sight of their origins and their function. Planes of nonfact may then be set up as though wholly independent of the so-called natural world. The question arises, Is there any necessary relationship between occurrence and assumed fact on the one hand, and nonfact on the other? No one, of course, knows the answer. We can, however, hazard the opinion that in the long run—a "run" so long at times that it could well involve thousands upon thousands of years—those planes of nonfact which lead men, particularly in the enterprise of practical living, to ignore or seriously to distort the theoretical plane of ascertainable fact, which is based on natural occurrence, will finally give way to planes of nonfact that are essentially compatible with the theoretical plane of ascertainable fact. That is to say, the probabilities are that some planes of nonfact are not independent (if indeed any of them are). Like the planes of assumed fact they have come into being because of the plane of occurrence, and they doubtless are limited by this protoplane in some essential respects.

THE RAW MATERIALS OF TRAGEDY

Tragedy is an art form, but it is not simply a matter of poetic rhythms and poetic language. Indeed, one may state that tragedy as an art form is unthinkable apart from certain raw materials of human experience. Man is himself the creator of the fine arts. He is also to a great extent the witting and unwitting fashioner of the raw materials that are indispensable to tragic poetry. Like other animals he must endure pain and must die, but unlike them man has developed such attitudes toward himself and his environment that he has brought into human experience qualities and degrees of suffering that set him wholly apart from all other creatures.

As aggregates of molecules in a fluid setting of other such aggregates, human beings could not possibly be material for tragedy. They become potentially tragic figures only when by chance or by insight they project their minds beyond the plane of occurrence. When, in their struggle to grasp occurrence, men create abstractions and give

these abstractions values and meanings, they are no longer the men they formerly were, and they no longer live as they did. By virtue of their creativity they have developed an awareness of themselves and their environment, and this awareness impels them to give direction to their lives. The direction is, to be sure, very vague, but it can be roughly indicated by a concept like "the good life." Whatsoever these words may mean to various people, they represent an undefined but nevertheless compelling goal.

The consciousness of a goal creates many difficulties for men. Not only do men get into trouble because their goal is not clearly defined and may, in effect, be indefinable, but also because their understanding is not adequate. They have never been able to report occurrence with complete accuracy, and there is no probability that they will ever be able to do so. In truth, the planes of assumed fact have been altered and corrected so many times that one conclusion alone is permitted us: men can never be finally successful with their abstractions. Matters are still worse as regards values and meanings. The planes of nonfact are multifarious and contradictory as well as dependent frequently enough on irreducible subjectivity. Taken altogether they make it seem that men have constructed their plans of life in a most bizarre manner. The resultant life becomes like a house put together by architects and contractors all engaged on the one project yet working independently of one another. The house of life appears to be without rational design and hopelessly cluttered with debris. It is no wonder that the inhabitants have difficulties with their physical surroundings, their housemates, and themselves.

While people with orderly minds try to straighten things out, they rarely agree as to what constitutes order. The inhabitants of the house of life are of many different persuasions and shades of persuasion. At one extreme are those who insist that the way to get order is to tear the house down to the very foundations. They find the superstructure idiotic and thus wholly superfluous; so they wish to get rid of every part of it. Then by creeping into the cellar, they figuratively crawl back into the womb of reality—in this instance, the plane of occurrence. With nonfact thoroughly discredited and abandoned, only Nature can remain; ergo, only reality will remain. Further, to guard against other activities in nonfact, they reduce language to an occurrential foetal jargon which in essence communicates the following continuum: An occurrence is an occurrence is an occurrence is an. . .⁶ At the other extreme are those who insist that the way to get order is to remove all portions of the house, including if necessary the very foundations, except that part which the proponents favor. A few of them think that everything should be removed—the house, the foundations,

6. All scientific endeavor finally comes to tautology: the aspects of Nature, taken together, are Nature: that is, Nature is Nature.

and the site itself. Obviously what would then remain could be comprehensible only to some Cheshire creatures. Between these two extremes are a multitude of people, all with their own notions of facts, values, and meanings. As we run through the entire gantlet of opinions we find none who does not think his blow is the best.

Eventually some men do discover that the majority of the schemes and opinions, if not all, can never be wholly satisfactory. Such men learn that the foundations and the house are not two separable parts but two manifestations of one thing. In other words, it is clear that human beings can think and speak only by referring to planes of occurrence, fact, and nonfact. It is also clear that their actions will be related to their thinking. The utterances and the actions, moreover, invariably reveal the different facets of humankind.

Man is, of course, a complex occurrence in an environment of innumerable other complex occurrences. To grasp him as a unit in an undifferentiated complexity is probably impossible. The more profitable procedure is to examine several dominant facets, treating them as though separable, and then to consider man as an entity. In this procedure we run grave risks of falling into serious error, but we also have an opportunity both to widen and to deepen our understanding of the whole man. We shall probably not wander hopelessly astray if we constantly bear in mind that man is an indivisible entity in which all the arbitrarily differentiated "parts" interpenetrate one another.

Because we have said that man is a complex occurrence in an environment, we shall first briefly turn our attention to man's physical surroundings.

The Physical Environment

Despite current excitement about man-made satellites and travel to what is called outer space, our knowledge of the forces operative in our immediate galaxy, to say nothing of those pertaining to the universe at large, is not yet sufficient to permit us to speak with any certainty of their influence on human beings. For this study we can confine our attention largely to this earth in this relatively tiny solar system. The local forces, as we may call them, and the conditions of biological existence set up definite limits for human life. The limits are roughly determined by the following phenomena: climates and seasons; mountains, plains, forests, swamps, and waterways; lands that are productive and lands that are unproductive. From what we can observe in our faulty ways, the physical environment appears to be a flux. Nothing is stable; everything is constantly changing. The effects on human beings are profound.

Homo Sapiens

The three dominant facets of the human being are his animal nature,

his social proclivities, and his capacity for individuality. We shall discuss all three with special reference to the raw materials of tragedy.

The Animal. Man is fundamentally an animal; that is, he is a biological manifestation observed in the plane of occurrence. As an animal, man must have food to nourish his body, and at times he must also provide shelter for himself. Moreover, he is driven periodically by the sex instinct and cannot resist seeking relief from his physiological distress by mating whenever an opportunity presents itself. With food, shelter, and sex mates often in limited supply, competition arises. In the ensuing conflicts, the strongest, the fleetest, and the craftiest animals are the most likely to acquire what they need for survival, while the weakest, the slowest, and the dullest tend to live precariously until they are killed by their enemies or else die from starvation, disease, exposure, or injuries. The circumstances arising from the constantly changing environment as well as from genetic and other physiological qualities not only require the struggle for survival but also determine the degree of success that an animal may attain.

Since animal life is in the plane of occurrence, it can be studied scientifically and reported as assumed fact. It is therefore nonqualitative material. Nevertheless it serves as raw materials for tragedy. This becomes clear when we remember that man is not just a simple animal; he is a very complex creature. The scientific discussions of man can thus never be wholly successful, for they consist of probable half truths and errors. As long as a human being is alive, however, the animal qualities manifest themselves, and they are basic to social relations and to individuality. They are also in conflict with them. The urges of the animal are to survive and swive and thrive, but "society" and individuality insist on other compulsions and restraints on the basis of significant values. The conflicts precipitate difficulties which cannot be reconciled without sacrifice of some values. The animal may thus have to give way to the social and the individual, or else the values of the latter must be sacrificed. The inevitable result is physical suffering or mental anguish, or both.

The Social Creature. Animals are defined by protoplasm and by motor responses. There is, however, nothing comparable in men to define them as social creatures. Patently while animal nature is in the plane of occurrence, social manifestations originate in nonfact planes. It is because they have hit upon language and have thus created and developed what we may well describe as a language world that men have finally attained so many relations with their fellow human beings that they have become inextricably involved with one another. Because of language they have been able to give expression to values pertaining to their animal nature and also to make something else of them. Indeed, out of the animal circumstances of food, shelter, and sex, men have fabricated social institutions which, taken together, have consti-

tuted the maze of human relations that men call "society."⁷ It is, of course, these relations that in a loose way define man as a social creature and presumably set limits to what is termed social behavior.

Social behavior is given form through various systems of laws, both written and unwritten, and different sets of customs, all of which are in planes of nonfact. All are regulating and thus, in some respects, all are restraining or compulsive. The assumption behind social controls is that human nature must be arrayed in fairly standard social dress; also, that morality must be controlled socially, both through laws and through customs. In support of the laws we find legislative bodies, executives, courts, and police; in support of customs we find groups of men that control a variety of rewards and punishments. Despite fervent pronouncements about the complete immutability of human nature and the impossibility of affecting morals by laws, it is obvious that laws and customs are directed both to the change of human nature and to the legislation of morals. It is, in fact, the conviction that law and custom are effective that has made it possible for so many men to live so intimately with one another.

Inasmuch as men do not fully understand the plane of occurrence and consequently have their minds charged with error, it follows that they get into difficulties with their laws and customs. A plane of nonfact that functions as an interpretation of a faulty plane of assumed fact gives promise of trouble. Thus, perplexing as the failures and inconsistencies in the control of social behavior may be, they are to be expected. It is obvious, for example, that men do not necessarily thrive because they conform to law and custom, and do not necessarily suffer because they fail to conform. The successful man is not automatically a good man, and the failure is likewise not automatically a bad man. What we call the good man may enjoy mediocre success or even fail miserably in the eyes of his fellow men, while the one we call "bad" may succeed strikingly. This seeming defect in social procedures should warn us that social behavior is not identical with animal behavior. If a man refuses to take nourishment of any kind, he soon dies, and there are no exceptions. So too, if a man suffers exposure beyond the endurance of the body, he dies. Again, if he is not satisfied sexually, the animal man suffers physiological distress and the species may be diminished. There are no such inevitable consequences

7. Note these statements by Ernest C. Moore: "Now, if my illustration is worth anything, it seems to warrant certain conclusions. First, that society is a very unsatisfactory word to use to describe what exists here. It is a noun for which there is no thing. The thing which exists calls for an adjective, an adverb, or a verb. Folks exist. . . . My point is that the centers of initiation, the wells of energy, the existent beings are always individuals. They make tools, they fight, they make peace, they converse, they traffic, they make inventions, they build institutions, they form states, they organize sciences and they develop and cherish ways of life which they teach their children and these their children after them, but these things are their handiwork and are less and other than they." "Institutions are functionings of men. They are real only as minds make them, no matter how much heaping up of wood and stone or printer's ink they may have occasioned. . . . To use such terms as the church, the family, the city, the state and society is always to invite the mind to regard as separate and static entities certain peculiar human relations which are dynamic and functional." From "What Is Meant by Social Activity?" in *Essays in Honor of John Dewey* (New York, 1929), pp. 279, 280.

for social behavior. A stupid unsocial man may be apprehended by his fellows and executed, but an extremely clever unsocial man may not only be highly acclaimed and munificently rewarded but may also be assigned a favorable niche in history.

Basically the social creature is always an animal, and this condition is of prime importance. Because of ignorance, bewilderment, fear, and frustration, men become suspicious of social ways. They tend then to fall back on the animal procedures of the jungle, for they feel instinctively that the strong, the fleet, and the cunning will survive and prosper. With their animal instincts men appraise society as a new kind of jungle, something far more complicated than that inhabited by feral creatures. The most successful animal at times camouflages his aggressiveness, or lurks in ambush; so too, human animals in the jungle of social relations mask themselves or prepare for a surprise attack. Though they are semisocialized, mouth idealistic platitudes, and solemnly subscribe to altruistic principles, men are engaged primarily in the animal enterprise of staying alive. They naturally translate physical survival into a material social success that provides the power to take what they want and to interpret their actions as they see fit.

Despite the confusing picture of social procedures, this mixture of animal with something other than animal, one fact stands out clearly: even as the least of semisocial creatures a man is distinguished from the other animals by his employment of planes of nonfact. The brute animal remains wholly within the plane of occurrence and changes its ways and nature according to the compulsions of its environment. Social man, however, puts forth some effort to control his environment and to fashion himself according to a commonly approved pattern.

The modified behavior of social man has produced a new world bringing innumerable gifts, both material and not material. But the gifts have been obtained at a price, for the life of social man is far more troublesome than that of the animal. Because of socialization the opportunities for survival are greatly improved; at the same time the possible pitfalls of failure become more varied and numerous. We cannot fail to observe that through the social planes of nonfact men have uncovered a surprising variety of ways and means to implement the suffering endured by brute animals. Indeed, they have made it possible for men, women, and children to drag out an entire lifetime of pain and misery. As a result, social man readies human existence for the tragic experience.

The Individual. Every animal is a unique biological manifestation, but only a human being appears to have the capacity to be clearly aware of himself as such a being. Because of this capacity, a man can add the egoic force to the complex of forces governing him; that is, by asserting free will he can seize upon it for himself and give direction to his own life. This does not mean that in creating his own free will man

can attain absolute dominion over himself and his environment; it means only that at times he can recognize options and exercise choice and then act so as to attain some dominion over himself and his surroundings. He can do this because his belief in free will has added another factor to the complex of determining forces, and sometimes this factor is decisive. By virtue of his free will a man moves more easily in his world than he did as a brute creature or even as a semisocial human being, and he is more conscious of his thoughts and his actions. At the same time, it must be recognized that more conflicts are engendered. With free will a man must accept the probability of internal conflicts, those arising within his own consciousness because he does recognize options and feels that he must come to a decision. He must also be prepared for other new kinds of conflict. Some will arise between himself as an individual and some other human being as an individual. Others will develop between the man himself as an individual and his fellow men either as animals or as representatives of institutions.

Hyperconsciousness is a source of creative power by means of which a man may shape himself and in shaping himself help to create a different world. The mind of the individual prevents him from being completely submerged in the plane of occurrence or dominated by social planes of nonfact. Instead of the instinctive sex acts of the feral creature or the licensed coupling of social man, the individual discovers love and fellowship. Instead of blind conditioning to laws and customs, the individual grows in his understanding of values, and he develops concepts of the good, the true, and the beautiful. These are, moreover, not merely emotional responses; they are cerebrational experiences which complement logical and mathematical activity. The concept of the good, for example, may very well emerge from experiential extrapolations from gradations of behavior; the true, from evaluations in fact and in nonfact; the beautiful, from rhythmic expressions of fact and nonfact. And the superlative of all concepts—perfection or God—may be the extrapolation from all extrapolations, evaluations, and expressions. That concepts of the good, the true, the beautiful, love, and perfection are developed experientially without conscious methodology may make us extremely cautious in accepting them but should not blind us as to their significance. Values, we must remind ourselves, do not exist in the plane of occurrence or in planes of assumed fact; they arise in qualitative nonfact planes of reference. Values are determined neither by mathematics nor by logic, but by insight, a human faculty which makes possible the nonmethodological deployment and interpretation of experience.

At first thought it would seem that a man as an individual should be able to avoid the snares of tragic possibilities, for he can give some direction to his own life and thus presumably is in a favorable position to escape suffering. Yet it is precisely because of his greater endow-

ment that his life is potentially tragic, and it may also be the reason that in literature only such a life can be tragic. Animals live solely in nature, in what we refer to as the plane of occurrence, and fully developed social creatures are conditioned to respond almost automatically to their roles in life. While the human individual is admittedly animal and social, he is at the same time something more. Though he is imperfect as an individual, he yet struggles to give direction to his own life, and he has to do this in the presence of a teeming mass of other human beings. In this mass he encounters some individuals like himself; the others, however, are largely animals, semisocial creatures, and something approximating social automata. The individual is able to recognize options and thus is in a position to make his own decisions. He cannot, however, translate his decisions into action without serious involvement with his fellow men, an involvement often marked by extreme differences in understanding and sharp conflicts of interest. His action stimulates sympathetic or opposing reactions on the part of his fellow men, and the forces then loosed by all the participants are beyond the control of any one of them. Since the individual insists on choosing and acting for himself in matters he deems important, he incurs responsibility both for maintaining himself in relation to his fellows and for preserving his integrity; that is, he is responsible for being acceptable both to others and to himself. The probabilities are against a successful, happy life.

The individual, as we see him, is at the center of tragic possibilities. He is placed there by his special endowments. He has at least a modicum of free will by means of which he endeavors to direct his own life. Living in a fluid, complex environment, he recognizes different courses of action, and he chooses those which seem to give promise of the good life, howsoever he may define that life. He is, unfortunately, never equal to all the demands of the various situations in which he finds himself, and his inadequacy carries him into errors of decision and of action. Through irrevocable choice and irreparable deed, he designs his own suffering. The human individual is therefore a model for a tragic character in a work of literature.

The Whole Man. Each human being is an essentially unanalyzable and relatively unstable flux of animal, social, and individual qualities, with the animal frequently dominant and the individual sometimes barely detectable. By virtue of social ways of life, the animal qualities are often assigned to various planes of nonfact and are revaluated without regard to the planes of fact. In addition, creative man has fashioned so many different planes of nonfact that all men live in a confusion of occurrence, the factual reports thereof, and the interpretations of the facts, all more or less inseparable from innumerable additaments of factitious material.

It is no wonder that man's life has been described as a game, a race,

a battle, or an unending struggle, for it is all of these and none. It is no wonder that for thousands of years men have dreamed of golden ages, paradises, or utopias free from all meanness, injury, and suffering. In various ways men have sought to obliterate the petty, provincial, dishonest opportunism which dominates the lives of humankind, and to cultivate integrity and wisdom. They have failed and continue to fail because the business of living is so complicated, so difficult, and so bewildering that no one can fully master it. Each man, each woman, and each child is a unique biological manifestation, and each is also a unique permutation of animal, social, and individual qualities. As a consequence large masses of human beings are fundamentally unanalyzable and unpredictable; they offer no certain bearings by means of which an individual may confidently chart his life course. Under such conditions no man can move with the assurance that he can successfully cope with all the circumstances encountered. It is inevitable that if he survives long enough he will get into difficulties which will shatter and destroy him or else leave him a broken man. It may seem ironic, but the human being most fully developed as an individual runs the greatest risks as well as faces the greatest opportunities. More than others, he is able to direct himself toward fulfilment, but thereby he has to make decisions which others do not have to make, and the risks of error are multiplied. More than others he is thus likely to get caught in conflicts from which he cannot emerge scatheless, if indeed he can even emerge from them.

The struggles and defeats of human beings little endowed with individuality tend to evoke our compassion, notably when these battered creatures are harmless. We are sorry for them, and we long for the strength to put aright the disordered world that causes so much unnecessary suffering to men, women, and children who are unable to fend for themselves. Our response is one of pathos. In the struggles and defeats of well-developed individuals, on the other hand, we see the best and the worst of humankind, nobility at one extreme and debasement at the other. We see men and women of exceptional ability and promise rising to meet threatening situations, battling vigorously, and finally yielding and suffering. Through them we see a potential human heaven and an actual human hell; in them we see strength made impotent through human weakness. And we ourselves feel readied for the struggle that may challenge us and doom us. This is the kind of vision that brings into focus the raw materials of tragedy. It is the kind of cultural atmosphere in which potentially tragic figures can be developed.

CARL E. W. L. DAHLSTRÖM

[Professor Dahlström's paper on tragedy will be concluded in the September issue of *Modern Drama*.]

THE 1957-58 SEASON IN ROME

ALMOST THE FIRST THING that strikes one upon coming to Italy, especially the central and southern parts, is the drama of Italy. The entire history of Italy from the beginnings up to the present, of course, has been one vast drama; but even more the people themselves seem to sense the drama implicit in every life situation, and they play their parts up to the hilt, even improvising new parts on every possible occasion. Their love of costumes is evidenced by the fact that almost every trade is marked by a characteristic uniform. And one could never come to know all the myriad uniforms to be seen in and around the Quirinale in Rome. Pageants, parades, spectacles are innumerable in Italy: the *Carnivale* celebrated all over Italy, the *Corsa del Palio* in Siena, the *Giòstra del Saracino* in Arezzo, the *Redentóre* in Venice, the various *cavalcate* in Sardinia, and many others. Ceremony is an everyday part of life in greetings and leave-takings. Every small situation becomes dramatized: an insignificant automobile accident involving only a scratched fender, the giving of a ticket by a policeman, any trifling disagreement will call forth a one-act play. Their feelings are always very close to the surface and inevitably become expressed dramatically with a beautiful command of gesture. To ride a bus to town or to walk along the streets of Rome or Naples is to present oneself at the theater where an infinite number of dramas are acted out one after another. And immediately one would assume that the legitimate theater would be a live and flourishing affair in Italy. Yet a survey of the plays being written and produced shows that this is far from the truth. Take the 1957-58 season in Rome, for example.

It is, of course, very difficult to judge or even characterize a season in midseason, but one or two things do seem to be quite evident: that is, almost no new and significant plays are being written and produced. What plays do appear on the stage are largely foreign plays and revivals of earlier Italian successes.

In all, there are some twelve theaters in Rome (not counting such places as Castel San Angelo and the Roman Theater in Ostia) where plays are given, and of these, seven seem to have a regular season, short or long as the case may be. During the 1957-58 season running from mid-October to mid-April, about forty-seven different authors (not counting musical comedies) have been produced or are scheduled. (The final figure for the season will no doubt be somewhat larger.) Of these forty-seven, twenty-two are foreign (eleven French, seven American, others English, Russian, Chinese), five are revivals, and seven are

popular Neapolitan or Roman. Of the new plays produced this season only two seem of any importance, or at least one can say they are enjoying a fairly long run. The total number of plays (which includes one-acters) certainly is not very imposing for a city of almost 2,000,000.

Some of the foreign plays which have had success are: John Van Druten's *I Am a Camera*, Francis Goodrich and Albert Hackett's *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, Alan Melville's *Simone and Laura*, Terrence Rattigan's *Separate Tables*, Jean Anouilh's *Ornifle*, Louis Verneuil's *La Poltrona 47*, Denise Amyel's *La Tuó Giovinezza*. Scheduled to be produced are Tennessee Williams' *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Marcel Achard's *Patate*, and two plays by the Comédie Française of Paris: Molière's *L'École des maris* and Marivaux's *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard*.

Italian revivals this season have been Carlo Goldoni's *L'imprésario delle Smirne* (18th century), Gabriele D'Annunzio's *La figlia di Iorio* (early 20th century), Vittorio Alfieri's *Oreste* (late 18th century), and Rosso di San Secondo's *Le esperienze di Giovanni Arce, filosofo* (early 20th century). Scheduled is Luigi Pirandello's *Enrico IV*. The new Italian plays of any note are Diego Fabbri's *Figli d'arte* and Fabrizio Sarazani's *Le grande famiglia*. Under the title *Tutto il mondo ride*, five one-act plays are enjoying a long run; these include four plays, by Tchechov, Eugene Labiche and Marc-Michel, Gabriel D'Hervilliez, Georges Feydeau, and one new Italian play by Ennio Flaiano, *La donna nell'armadio*.

Classic popular Neapolitan farces, written, directed, and acted by Peppino de Filippo are quite popular and can be enjoyed even by a foreigner who has difficulty following the give-and-take of the dialogue. Eduardo, the brother of Peppino and considered the more profound of the two, has not appeared so far this season. Popular Roman comedy carrying on the tradition of Ettore Petrolini is being directed and acted by Checco Durante. It enjoys considerable success even though it is in *romanésco*.

To round out the description of the season we can mention the following: Paris' Petit Théâtre de Montmartre (a cabaret show); the Chinese National Theater, which gave three enjoyable performances; mystery plays by Edgar Wallace (*Chicago, On the Spot*); the Teatro Piccole Maschere where puppet shows are given every Sunday (more entertaining to adults than to children, I think); the ancient Roman theater in Ostia where Plautus' *Menaechmi* and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* were produced last year; and finally musical comedies and intimate reviews, such as *I fuoriserie* with Wanda Osiris, *Un paio d'ali* with Renato Rascel, and *Lina e il cavaliere* with Franca Valeri.

The plays which have enjoyed the most success so far this season according to the critics and various theatergoers are *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Orestes*, *La figlia di Iorio*, and *Separate Tables*. The

Orestes production directed by Vittorio Gassman is the same one which was hailed by the critics last year at the International Theater Festival in Paris. Gassman himself seems to be the most interesting figure in Italian theater at the moment, and has been called the Olivier of Italy. He is both director and actor and often brings Elizabethan, Greek, and French plays to the modern Italian stage. Last year he acted in *Othello*, *Ornifle*, *Orestes*, and *I tromboni*, the last a new play in Milan by Federico Zardi and a smash hit. For his part in *I tromboni*, Gassman received the *máschere d'oro* for the best interpretation of 1957. So far this year he has acted in *Orestes* and *Ornifle*.

The Diary of Anne Frank was first put on in Italy and Rome last year (by the same company) and gave rise to many of the "best" awards: the best director, Giorgio de Lullo, one of the two best actresses, Anna Maria Guarnieri, and the best character actor, Romolo Valli. It was the biggest success of the 1956-57 season.

De Lullo is generally considered a really talented young director and is expected to go far. The best actors in Italy on the basis of performances last year and this year are, in addition to Gassman and Valli, Renzo Ricci (O'Neill's *A Long Day's Journey into Night*, last year in Milan), Giorgio Albertazzi (Gaso's *A Hatful of Rain*, last year in Milan), and Enrico Salerno (Salvatore Cappelli's *Il diácolo Peter*, last year in Milan). The best actresses, in addition to Guarnieri, are Ann Proclemer (*A Hatful of Rain*), Olga Villi (Pirandello's *Ma non è una cosa seria*, last year in Milan), and Maria Fabbri (*Ornifle*, last year). The best writers appear to be Guido Rocca (*I coccodrilli*), Federico Zardi (*I tromboni* and *I Giacobini*), Luigi Squarzina (*La Romagnola*), and Diego Fabri (*Figli d'arte*).

In sum, though here and there interesting plays are being produced, the theater of Rome and of Italy is not as exciting or interesting as one might expect. In the newspaper *Messaggero* the other day appeared a little story: a fake priest had been cornering various poor people, telling them that the vineyards of the church had overproduced last year, so that there was an excess of wine. And he was selling it to them at a reduced price, taking their money with the promise that the wine would be delivered later. Of course, it never arrived. The police finally caught up with him in a little *trattoria* (restaurant) in Trastevere. When they told him to come along to the Questura, he put his hands piously together as in prayer and said, "*Consummatum est*," as he walked quietly off with them. The best "theater" in Italy is to be found in the streets and *trattorias*.

MERREL D. CLUBB, JR.

THE LONDON SEASON

THERE ARE NOT MANY TRUSTWORTHY CONCLUSIONS to be drawn from six months of limited playgoing, but the first and most enduring is that the London theater is a more lively and varied one than any in the United States, and, from all reports, in Europe as well. There are banality and commercialism enough, but interesting plays still seem to be able to survive without thunderous acclaim. Except for *My Fair Lady* or a Margot Fonteyn appearance at Covent Garden, tickets are generally available at fairly short notice; and they are quite cheap by American standards. (Most theaters still hold gallery seats for sale the day of the performance at prices under half a dollar; it is possible for students to go to the theater often and easily.) In part, the situation is improved by subsidy; the Arts Council has about three million dollars to distribute annually, although it must be a small portion that reaches the Old Vic and the English Stage Company. Yet the vigor of related arts, such as opera and ballet, and the survival of numerous local repertory companies must have their effect upon the training of audiences as well as of players and writers. (In East Kent, for example, there are companies in Canterbury, Margate, and Folkestone which present, somehow, a new play each week throughout the year, with occasional revivals of classics and more occasional original productions. There are, as a result, between four and five thousand actors employed in live theater in England, and the London stage has not shown any attrition before television.) As part of the climate which keeps the theater interesting, one should mention as well the BBC Third Programme. Reduced in time to about twenty hours a week, it still does two full-length performances each week of a great range of plays—Shakespeare's *King John*, *Cymbeline*, and *Pericles* recently; Ugo Betti, Samuel Beckett, Romain Rolland, Gorki, Musset, Kleist, new translations of Sophocles and Aristophanes.

There are two further aspects of the London theater which must strike an American. One is the versatility and dedication of its fine actors. This season Sir John Gielgud will have played in *The Tempest*, Graham Greene's *The Potting Shed*, and *Henry VIII*. Robert Helpmann, who is certainly unique, after both acting and directing at the Old Vic last year, has so far this season played in Sartre's *Nekrassov* and Noel Coward's *Nude with Violin* and is now dancer and choreographer for the current Royal Ballet season. The other is the sense of an international theater one can get in London. Last year there were two French companies, the Berliner Ensemble doing Brecht, the Polish

State Jewish Theater, and the Bolshoi Ballet. There is no such array this season, but there have been a brilliant company from the Chinese Classical Theater in Formosa, dance groups from every nation or subnation in eastern Europe, a pantomime from Denmark; and in the late spring there will be four weeks of the Moscow Art Theater doing Chekov. Politics and ease of transportation account for the second of these advantages, no doubt; the first and perhaps the greater is probably due to the repertory tradition.

Although they hardly account for the largest share of the London theater, the repertory theaters have great influence. The Old Vic is this year completing, in eight Shakespeare productions, its Five Year Folio Plan. Next year it may return to performing other classics (it will do Schiller's *Maria Stuart* at Edinburgh) or even doing new plays; it will by fall have a new workshop adjoining the theater. And the most important group in London at the moment is the English Stage Company, which has just completed its second year at the Royal Court in Chelsea. It produced in its first year or so works by Giraudoux, Ionesco, Beckett, Brecht, Arthur Miller, Angus Wilson, Nigel Dennis, and, of course, John Osborne. So far this season it has done Sartre's *Nekrassov*, Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*, Dudley Fitts' translation of *Lysistrata*, a new play by Ann Jellicoe, and two Osborne works. There are more things to come, and there have been single Sunday performances of about a dozen new plays so far. Like the Old Vic, the Royal Court has been able to attract distinguished performers; not only Olivier and Helpmann, but also Peggy Ashcroft, Joan Greenwood, and, at present, Yvonne Mitchell. Even more it has trained a company of remarkable young actors, who achieve great vigor without monotony or mystique.

Perhaps because of its range and high professional skill, the English theater seems much more an actor's theater than a playwright's. It has been said that half the plays in London come from France, and the other half from the United States. If one were to alter that to "interesting plays" and discount John Osborne, it would be oppressively close to truth. There has been Sartre's comedy; there will be Giraudoux' *Pour Lucrèce*, adapted by Christopher Fry (as *Duel of Angels*) and directed by Jean-Louis Barrault; and there is now an excellent performance of Anouilh's *Dinner with the Family*. So far as American plays go, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Iceman Cometh* have recently been well received, and *Long Day's Journey into Night* will move into London after next summer's Edinburgh Festival.

Where does all of this leave the English playwright? He is not yet much in evidence. A good case to consider is Robert Bolt, whose *Flowering Cherry* has had a great success, due in large part to Ralph Richardson and Celia Johnson. Bolt is a man in his middle thirties who has been a schoolmaster and a successful radio playwright. This is his first West End play, and it has raised the usual question of whether here is

at last a new writer of importance. The play presents a family corrupted by the character of the father, Jim Cherry, a man whose ego is so mutilated that it engrosses all of his attention and love. He is a chronic liar, to himself first of all. He yearns for a country place with orchards, and meanwhile drifts into alcoholism and out of his job. One gradually feels the pressure of his sickness on the family around him; he arouses hatred in his children and yet schools them in the deceptions he lives by. His wife, defeated by his remoteness and evasiveness, tries to help him. Her last, desperate effort is to give him the orchards he keeps talking about; and, of course, he is horrified at the prospect. The play is set in the Cherrys' suburban kitchen, and it has its own gadgets: an adolescent son who reads thematic lines out of his copy of T. S. Eliot; a seductive girl from a coffee bar who tempts Cherry into daydreams of youthful strength; a drab but noble wife who is acutely understanding or quaintly naïve (as in the offer of the orchard) as the plot requires; a tree salesman who falls in love with the wife and tries to take her away from it all.

There are overtones in Bolt's play which recall Osborne's *The Entertainer*. (Here Cherry's counterpart, Archie Rice, is also played by a major actor who is too big for the part and far more interesting than the character he must pretend to be.) What strikes one in the two plays is the attempt to imply something about contemporary England through a study of the middle generation. Archie's father, Billie Rice, belongs to the day of the great music hall artists; Jim Cherry's empty job is set against the nostalgic recollection of life on the land. In both plays the lost middle generation is brought to crisis and self-destruction by the demand of its children for candor and clarity. In Bolt's play, where neither parents nor children quite come to understanding of their plight, it is a cruel adolescent girl who destroys illusions. In Osborne's play the conflict is less artificial, but the central spokesman for realism is Archie's daughter, a character who could not command the sympathy the author seemed to expect and is now, I understand, played more harshly. Archie Rice is capable, in his more Olivier-like moments, of a grim awareness, and his ode to Mahalia Jackson (a good case of the unconvincing "literary" tone of so much of Osborne—one wishes that Archie didn't seem to listen to Kingsley Amis's broadcasts on jazz) is far more articulate than Cherry's groans and twitches. In both there is a kind of maudlin egocentricity growing into ruthlessly irresponsible use of others. The neurotic middle-aged man becomes, particularly for Osborne, a symbol of that generation that stands between the old convictions which once fertilized life and a new ordering that will clear away their vestiges. It is a generation living on the patterns of the past without either believing in them or rejecting them—the generation, one might say, of the Suez crisis rather than the Battle of Britain. Osborne's symbol of the *Entertainer* perhaps derives

something from Miller's *Salesman*, but the play gains more from another possible derivation. The Rices have at times the capacity for the self-torture and blind suffering of O'Neill's family in *Long Day's Journey*. And somehow, like minor Jobs or Lears, they achieve a surprising dignity.

Osborne's two very successful plays illustrate, like Bolt's, a tendency of the angrier young playwrights to turn to Americans like Williams, Miller, and late O'Neill for direction. Osborne has one quality in common with Williams that seems to me unfortunate. It is not simply a fondness for the sound of his own rhetoric (Williams publishes separately the bad poetry that one feels at the edge of his plays). It is a capacity for keeping oneself in a state of opportunistic ambivalence about central characters and situations. This is not "negative capability." It produces figures like the Blanche and Stanley of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, whose value can shift entirely with the players (as when Uta Hagen took the role of Blanche after Jessica Tandy). I do not believe the report that Williams did not realize he had comedy in *The Rose Tattoo* until after the first performance, but the story makes a point that I do believe. The same problems arise in *Look Back in Anger*; Jimmy Porter is in a state of compounded outrage, anguish, and self-absorption that makes any of his statements at once insufferably complacent and refreshingly honest. (Stanley Kowalski had just this quality in Marlon Brando's performance, at least in an early performance in New Haven.) This kind of ambivalence can make for richness of character, but it can also allow a young playwright to pour all the jottings in his commonplace book (or whatever ragbag he uses), all the strained witticisms and "flying" wit he can produce, into a character he need not begin to come to terms with. Archie Rice is at least farther from the playwright, one surmises, than Jimmy Porter; but I wonder how well Archie will survive an actor who does not bring to the role the intelligence and wit that are Olivier's more than the character's. Archie's shabby self-derision gains authority and depth just because Olivier is not contained fully in the character that Osborne has created. The chief danger in this procedure is the creeping sentimentality that one feels in the conception of the hero. Isn't he, after all, Hamlet bearding Polonius or exposing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? If he seems to be slightly mad with self-hatred, maudlin in the high expectations of himself that are disappointed, ostentatiously unlovable, there are always those moments when he delivers a few lines of Old Osborne's Best. And then who is to say whether he is the victim of a sodden wishful fantasy or a hero of painful integrity? This constant teasing with the thought that the changeling may be the prince is a way of catching that uncertain condition in which man has nothing to believe in but himself. But Anouilh, for one, can tease his audiences brilliantly without, as I feel Osborne does, teasing himself.

These impressions are strengthened by seeing an early play, *Epitaph for George Dillon*, written by Osborne in collaboration with Anthony Creighton. George Dillon is an actor-playwright who, in his thirties, has not yet arrived. He is a persistent parasite who finally achieves a shoddy success as a hack playwright and marries the girl he has seduced. As he is embraced by the frowzy middle-class family he has scorned and is now joining, he weeps—one might say over the dismal truth that he will never be John Osborne. Like both the other Osborne heroes, George Dillon wears his guilt on his sleeve. Through his demands on others he has earned the guilt of dishonest success without its rewards (Jimmy Porter marries a girl of higher social status; Archie Rice exploits his father's honest reputation; George Dillon lives on a motherly woman who gives him her dead son's savings). This combination of the guilt of false success and the disgust with failure makes for a bitterness that is vigorously satirical. But it always recoils. Must the satirist be sick? Can clear vision come except through failure? Or is Osborne a kind of Jansenist of "humanism," full of a sense of the terror and pain that man's responsibility for himself creates? (His hatred of the illusions of religion is curiously over-intense.) One recalls Archie Rice's agonized sense of his own emptiness, the Porters' relapse into the infantile coziness of playing squirrel and bear, George Dillon's horror at the possibility that he has all the symptoms of an artist without the substantial gift. There seems a driving need in all these characters to make their commitment as unsatisfying and difficult as possible, somewhat as a Graham Greene character might in a different case. Osborne's heroes wear their suffering with a kind of sentimental pride, as if any suffering redeemed or every failure were a kind of integrity. For all one's doubts, it is surprising how close Osborne comes to carrying this off. He is, in spite of the structural weaknesses and the occasional preciosity of his plays, a powerful and original writer who seems to have grown tremendously with each play so far.

Two additional plays provide a good view of the eminently commercial and professional theater on the one hand, and the aggressively experimental on the other. Benn Levy's new comedy, *The Rape of the Belt*, uses the meeting of Heracles and Theseus with the Amazons to create a comedy of ideas. The Amazons, it seems, are formidable not because they are unconquerable but because they never fight—except for cold wars in which propaganda has its victories. Levy makes Heracles a somewhat slow and solemn giant with real decency of feeling, Theseus a shallow man of the world and physical coward. The play confronts them with a world of which they never dreamed, one of peace, rationality, gentleness, and generosity. Of the two Amazon queens, Hippolyte is carefree and sensual, Antiope gracious but extremely alert and competent. This quartet of nicely balanced char-

acters is handsomely played, and much of the play is an occasion for the kind of counterpoint that can be provided by Constance Cummings and Kay Hammond as the two queens or John Clements and Richard Attenborough as the Greeks. There are framing dialogues throughout between Zeus and Hera, and in a constantly inventive play one of the nicest turns is the moment that Hera's imperious personality inhabits Hippolyte's languorous body. The play sags when it allows Heracles and Antiope too much tenderness and pathos, and in general, perhaps, it suffers most from a kind of earnestness that is appealing but undramatic. For this is a document of the period of England's concern with nuclear disarmament, and it presents too sunnily wishful a Utopia, where the good, wise mothers know best and can control the destructive children (Hera, it should be said, reverses this pattern among the gods). Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, whose argument Levy's play most strongly recalls, grants its visionary less respect and qualifies Caesar with the prospect of his assassination. This is an altogether less ambitious play than Shaw's; it does little with lesser roles, it settles too often for easy jokes, and it fails to bring off its shift of tone in the last act when it makes Heracles and Antiope the prisoners of irreconcilable worlds. But at least for half its length it keeps the memory of Shaw alive, it is unashamedly and knowingly theatrical, and it builds its humor upon a framework of ideas.

Finally, there is Ann Jellicoe's *The Sport of My Mad Mother*. This play, recently in repertory at the Royal Court, shared the third prize in the *Observer* play competition and is the first of the prize-winners to be produced. Here one feels the atmosphere of a drama school "original." The play presents a group of teddy boys and girls, led by a not very persuasive Life Force with a long red wig and full womb, an Australian girl named Greta. Into this group's alley hangout wanders a young American with dark-rimmed spectacles and a need to understand whatever he encounters. Tension grows between the American's feeble but persistent Mind and the Life Force's cruel, unpredictable vigor. ("All creation is the sport of my mad mother Kali," says the program, quoting a Hindu hymn.) What makes this play interesting is not its stock of ideas, needless to say, but rather its use of techniques of formalization. The treatment of language, except for some rather witless lyricism at intervals, may recall Eliot's jazz refrains in *Sweeney Agonistes* (this is the suggestion of Kenneth Tynan, and it seems just). For Miss Jellicoe, too, tries to present the current ills of our world, this time through the symbols of frightened, fidgety, aggressive adolescents. And she uses their East London idiom and their gawky but busy gestures as devices for catching the uneasy excitement of all of us. These characters are ready at every moment to bring overcharged nerves to playing with a home permanent kit (chanting the instructions in a jazz tempo and falling into a dance as they do) or to carrying on a suddenly terrifying

interrogation of the strange American in their midst. Three of the adolescents were beautifully played, and there seemed to be at least a dazzling one-act drama lost in this rather pretentious and directionless full-length play. By the time Greta is delivered of the Future, or what you will, the audience is cringing too hard to listen to the Theme.

Miss Jellicoe's play invites comparison with a new one-act ballet by Kenneth Macmillan, *The Burrow*, which was presented during the winter at Covent Garden. *The Burrow* is a far more dramatic work than Miss Jellicoe's, and a most impressive one. It is set in a large bare room that recalls a ward in a mental hospital. There are twenty people crowded in there, cowering at the prospect of some advent that is not explained. The range of anxiety is great—catatonic withdrawal, clinging dependence, erotic distraction, savage practical joking. At the end, as nerves are strained to the utmost, comes (out of *Sweeney Agonistes*, too?) the KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK and the curtain.

I have not tried to discuss any of the plays of foreign authorship that have been done this season, but it is worth recording, at least, that among recent productions outside the West End have been Pirandello's *Man, Beast, and Virtue*; Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*; and an arena staging of a new translation of Racine's *Phèdre*. Finally, I should add that one of the greatest resources of the current London theater is the weekly criticism, in the *Sunday Observer*, of Kenneth Tynan. Tynan can be silly, evangelistic, prejudiced (and very funny, when he is indignant enough); but for consistent enthusiasm, penetration, and clarity of commitment, he seems to me unique among current drama reviewers. He somewhat resembles Eric Bentley in America, but Tynan's reviews reach three-quarters of a million readers each week.

MARTIN PRICE

BOOK REVIEWS

THE HUMAN IMAGE IN DRAMATIC LITERATURE, by Francis Fergusson, Anchor, 1957, 217 pp. Price 95c.

This collection of essays on drama and literature brings to a wider audience some of the author's reflections previously published in various critical journals or delivered as lectures over the last dozen years or so. The essays are arranged in three groupings: modern theatre, Shakespeare, and critical attitudes. Governed by a consistent view of what is important in theatre and dramatic literature (a view which finds full expression in the author's *The Idea of a Theater*, 1949), the essays have a certain unity within their diversity. Together they show once again the philosophic scope and the lucid prose that distinguish Fergusson's criticism.

With mingled disillusionment and hope, he writes of Broadway, of the American theatre between the wars, and of the present situation. Discussing the "ill-defined notion" of "The American Theatre," he briefly chronicles the achievements of the various groups and movements since World War I while noting the absence of anything approaching a national tradition and style of theatre such as France is fortunate to possess. With regard to the academic theatre, he sees it as having played, for the last thirty years, an important if rather obscure part in the theatrical life of the country, and having the possibility of an important future as a laboratory. He is realistically aware, however, of the pressures which may make a college theatre, in betrayal of the ideals of a liberal education, imitate the shallow slickness of the Broadway entertainment industry and follow the authority of the market. In his sadly ironic analysis of the Broadway situation, Fergusson touches the heart of the matter when he says: "I do not see how our 'Theater' can ever be more than this small and extremely precarious luxury market, unless some common vision of human nature and destiny appears among us."

Serious and important dramatists do succeed in the market place, however, and in his study of five contemporary playwrights (Brecht, Wilder, Eliot, Joyce and Lorca) Fergusson discusses how the first three, all allegorists, have tried to come to terms with the demands of a mass audience. He finds in Brecht a brutal and myopic philosophy animating a first-rate dramatic talent. Brecht gives a sense of a "real" world and genuine human conflict, but Fergusson endeavors to show how Brecht, unnaturally cutting off pathos and perception, leaves the audience only with the sense of *agon*, the first part of the tragic rhythm which Aristotelian Fergusson insists on as the full and satisfying shape of drama. Where full possession of the Marxian-revolutionary point of view cannot be assumed, he points out, Brecht's plays might have different effects from those he had planned; there is no guarantee that the uninitiated will catch the right signals and read the allegorical message correctly—a fact which keeps Brecht relatively safe from patriotic picketing.

Wilder is praised as a technician of great skill and imagination who has, however, eluded rather than solved the basic dramatic problem of embodying form and meaning in character and language. Fearful of the distance between the Great Ideas and the generalized characters, dubious about drama of good feeling with so little sense of struggle, Fergusson tends to see Wilder as supplying tranquilizers rather than catharsis. Eliot, whose lyric verse Fergusson greatly admires for its concrete *symboliste* suggestivity, appears to him somewhat less satisfactory

as a maker of plays with abstract allegorical shapes imposed on the action. Listening closely to music of *The Confidential Clerk* he notes, somewhere far behind the visible and audible comedy for polite suburbs, "a resigned and lyric meditation on the ways of Providence"; but for him the distance between that and what Eliot's comedy seems to say is too great. Behind these views is a classical and Aristotelian view of drama that demands that the action be incarnate in individual lives, and a rejection of the Platonic notion of art as directly didactic, of drama as the demonstration of an idea.

As against the demonstration of an idea Fergusson prefers the "imitation of an action." The essay "*Macbeth* as the Imitation of an Action," though rather too brief to fully establish its thesis, reads Aristotle's *praxis* as nearer to "aim" or "motive" than outward deed, that is, as the inner movement of the play. In trying to define this action by an infinitive phrase (in this case "to outrun reason"), Fergusson follows Boleslavsky, once his teacher, and the theory of the Moscow Art Theatre. A demonstration of what may be called his "analogical" method, this essay, as well as the one on *Measure for Measure*, throws suggestive new light on two set-pieces of Shakespeare criticism.

In an age of much critical jargon and dogma it is gratifying to have a critic frankly recognize the empirical nature of his art. Renouncing the "mirage" of encyclopedic completeness or "scientific" soundness (although the unobtrusive scholarship utilized in these essays is hardly inconsiderable), Fergusson tries to cultivate "a sense of proportion." His Aristotelian basis allows a wide freedom; the method of analogical reading, admittedly dangerous, remains unforced. All of the essays testify to faith in literature as an autonomous activity with social and spiritual significance. In the slightest of them criticism itself appears as a valuable activity contributing to the life of humane letters.

KENNETH INNISS

A PRIMER FOR PLAYGOERS, by Edward A. Wright, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 270 pp.

A Primer for Playgoers, by Edward A. Wright, is intended principally, as the title suggests, for the playgoer, for the person who sits in the audience. It is an introduction to all phases of the theatre; and its aim is not only to add to the playgoer's enjoyment but to make him a more discriminating critic, thus gradually to "create a better audience which will in turn demand better theatre."

Mr. Wright covers an immense amount of territory in this book of 270 pages, though it might be more accurate to say that he raises an immense number of questions, all pertinent. It is obviously impossible in a "primer" to go thoroughly into such matters as the nature and function of art, the meaning of beauty, the tradition of tragedy from the Greeks to Arthur Miller, the history of drama, and the evolution of the modern theatre. It is possible only to introduce them; and this Mr. Wright does, interestingly and provocatively.

From his long experience as a teacher of drama and a director, Mr. Wright explains with the authority of a practitioner the many aspects of play production: the problems of the director, the actor, the scene and costume designers, the technicians—all the tangible and intangible elements which make a play and of which, for the most part, audiences are unaware. He includes also two chapters on cinema and television drama, line drawings illustrating modern trends in scenic design, many photographs of actual productions and of persons famous in the theatre, and a helpful glossary of theatre terms.

Mr. Wright is entirely aware of the fact that a book about the theatre will not *ipso facto* guarantee either enjoyment or discrimination on the part of the reader and playgoer. Enjoyment of any real significance and true discrimination and

taste in the theatre, as in any of the arts, must be earned through effort. As the *Preface* states, "Appreciation in itself cannot be taught. That is a by-product growing out of knowledge and understanding. It comes to the individual only after he has applied, first consciously and later unconsciously, all that he can learn about form and technique, accepted principles and practice." In other words, it all takes a bit of doing.

NATALIE CALDERWOOD

MAN IN HIS THEATRE, by Samuel Selden, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1957, 113 pp. Price \$3.00.

To Professor Selden, man in his theatre is essentially biological man set in an environment to which he must adjust. But man has powers and is a force in a life where his innate drives create the Ritual and Myth which are the substance of theatre. In his introduction Professor Selden states that his aim is to help stimulate a new awareness of dramatic forces. Although his ideas are not new—it is a book of "re-exploration," he writes—his ability to re-evaluate old ideas and to place man in his theatre in a reasonable relationship with both scientific and aesthetic views makes his essay a valuable contribution to works on the nature of drama.

The development of this long essay is clear and logical in the terms which Professor Selden accepts. He begins with *Oxytricha*, a one-celled organism whose capacities are slight but whose desires, though on a low level, suggest the three great fundamental drives of man: to exercise his powers, to preserve them, and to extend them. Exercise and preservation of his powers is not enough: man must plan, dream, progress. To completely fulfill himself, he must grow. But there is always a rising as well as a falling in life forces, and man from his earliest times has considered his welfare in terms of the cycle of days as well as the cycle of seasons. In fact, the days and the seasons became a part of his festive and religious experience. Consequently, he expressed his feelings in certain Rituals which gave birth to Myths, and from these two factors—Ritual and Myth—came the drama. The moving seasons represented the central theme of drama: summer was light, warmth, growth, good; winter was dark, coldness, decay, evil. Love was associated with growth, and the battle of the seasons became eternal as man found something worthy of his emotions and struggled toward that quality of summer which he desired. Here was the drama of life, and the theatre of man was of necessity closely related to the seasons.

Blended with this concept of the seasons as a part of ancient Ritual representing cyclic death and rebirth in nature is the Myth of eventual triumph. Even in tragedy one must face light as well as darkness—there must be rebirth through the return of a hero. Professor Selden shows this to be true in the ceremonies of ancient Greece and presents the idea in drama as a progression from King to Scapegoat to King's Son. "The best of drama," he writes, "that which has been most hardy through the centuries, is the kind which fulfills the age-old pattern of the warring seasons, expressed through the figures of a dying and a re-arising King." This principle, like the struggle between the forces of Summer and Winter, is part of the contribution of Ritual to the growth of drama. A third factor of Ritual is a sense of change, the seeking of something better. In Professor Selden's thesis this becomes a somewhat confusing suggestion that the change can be an Aristotelian reversal of fortune or an element of shock which involves the living or the dying but can be turned to good or evil according to the ability of the principals to make a "good adjustment." Myth, on the other hand, grows out of Ritual but lends intensity and power to both protagonist and antagonist. The Myth hero

may be discontented or a dreamer but he is an active rebel, striving "to belong." "Art," states Professor Selden, "is primarily an expression of man's urge to grow." One may observe the living or the dying as realist or as poet, but the artist must feel the life-and-death cycle, and however he views man's profound urges, he will regard them lovingly. This is the general thesis of *Man in His Theatre*.

One may agree or disagree with the point of view that Professor Selden adopts. Perhaps he does contrive his biological background a bit and thrust his Ritual and Myth into his thesis in too neat a manner. But, accepting his thesis, one finds an interesting and pleasant essay dealing in a sensible manner with a subject which does not always produce such temperate thought. One is stimulated but not shocked; one is made aware but not angry. There is a great deal to think about, but one is not constantly annoyed by half-thought-out ideas. Perhaps this is a major part of the volume's charm: rather than booming brass, it presents the stimulating mood of more subtle music—a moderate and intelligent criticism of dramatic art. However, a most significant aspect of this essay is its profound optimism. From his beginning chapter Professor Selden stresses man's constant striving and hoping. "Tomorrow will be better!" Perhaps the cynics doubt. "The fact remains, however, that hope, because inevitably it is biologically founded, is normal." Tragedy itself as a "feeling drama" must show a strong person who has a fair chance to win in his struggle; hence, there is the principle of the King's Son, a glimpse of hope at the end of the play. As an aspect of great drama Professor Selden emphasizes the classic tradition that something should rise out of sacrifice. William Faulkner recently gave the same idea prominence in his Nobel Prize speech. Man must always dream, and art allows him to dream of eternal spring where hope can have no limits. Through to his concluding paragraph, in which the artist is described as a lover and man as one struggling, with some chance of success, for the greatest possible enjoyment of life, Professor Selden sets forth a healthy optimistic note.

Man in His Theatre is not a striking re-appraisal of the nature of drama. Rather than make one gasp, it makes one think, and perhaps this is best in the long run. At any rate, along with its fine explanatory notes this long essay should be of value to the student who seeks to analyze dramatic art as it develops from man's fundamental urges.

WALTER J. MESERVE

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE ANNUAL, No. 2, edited by Harold Hobson, New York, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1957, 220 pp.

The second number of this very promising experiment brings evidence of growth in size, self-assurance, and sense of purpose. It is genuinely international: in fact it might be described as a cross between *Theatre Arts* and a United Nations brochure. The 47 pages of illustrations provide a graphic record of performances and players paralleling the special articles and five chapters which report on theatre in New York, Canada, and most of the principal European centers. Reports from Australia and Africa extend the range, even though South America and the Orient are not included. Throughout emerges the suggestion that the theatre is one of significant agencies that are working for harmony among nations and peoples.

The Introduction, by John Osborne, finds this dramatist of the moment quite amiably saying, "I have been extremely fortunate in my theatrical career." However, he finds his true pitch in urging the role of the theatre as that of attack, not only upon the British way of life and feeling, but upon all causes of dying hope and strength. "The theatre must be based on care," he says, "care for how people live and feel." The *International Theatre Annual* reflects this quality admirably, a

quality of care for what is really going on in the world of stage and drama. It does not blow a trumpet nor swing a sabre for some pet cause, left or right. Perhaps the point of view might best be described as a sensible receptivity. It is conveniently expressed by the editor, Mr. Harold Hobson, in a section labeled "I disagree." Mr. Hobson's views are familiar in his alert commentary as dramatic critic for the London *Sunday Times* and as correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*. In effect he reviews his own book with a salty directness that should have good results in his next issue of the *Annual*. To his writer on the Irish theatre he says: "What is there mournful in the fact that Dublin greatly enjoyed Noel Coward's *Nude with Violin*?" He proceeds to defend Naturalism even though he does not entirely prefer it, and he scores on the "enormous amount of humbug that is talked about abstract art." One feels safe with an editor who can welcome Brecht without sneering at Ibsen.

Editor Hobson disagrees most strongly with his contributors for the "faint air of depression which overshadows the attitude of most of them." J. C. Trewin, familiar as the reviewer for the *Illustrated London News*, is an exception, since he is "consistently, almost belligerently optimistic." To be sure the past year has been one of relative decline: but what year could compete with that of the first volume of the *Annual*, the year of *The Diary of Ann Frank*, *The Chalk Garden*, *Tiger at the Gates*, *The Lark*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Teahouse of the August Moon*, and the stupendous *My Fair Lady*? From the section which supplies statistics one can learn that in that year 182 productions had their world premieres, while in the current year 229 at least stood up to be counted in, or out. Mr. Alan Schneider, reporting on the New York stage, feels compelled to rest his case on revivals, chiefly O'Neill, and the headlining of the Actor's Studio and the Stanislavsky "Method" as news. He does recall that O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*, "superlatively cast and sensitively produced," opened to universal acclaim (including a fourth Pulitzer Prize) and has since been hailed as the supreme achievement in American playwriting." Mr. J. W. Lambert opens his comment on the London theatre with the statement that "For the most part the British theatre resounds with tiny, cheerful cries, like the playground of some infants' school—a condemned playground of course."

Since most of the contributors find occasion for gloom, there is the more reason to hope that the *International Theatre Annual* may help to bring better times. All agree that superb actors are available. One of them, in fact, is among the contributors. Sir Donald Wolfit, calling for a subsidy of the theatre as for parks, art galleries, and the like, offers a valuable, well-informed summary of the role of the actor-manager, from Alleyn and Burbage down to the present. He implies that the theatre needs more of this almost vanished race. Wolfit scores on Shaw, who attacked the prestige of such great devotees of the stage, since for him there could be only one man in the theatre, Shaw himself. That Shaw could leave his fortune for purposes other than founding a National Theatre, such as he constantly cried out for, is the unkindest cut of all.

It is hard to conceive that anyone who is even faintly interested in theatre should not find much to enjoy in the *International Theatre Annual*. At first handling it may seem to suffer somewhat from economy in bookmaking. However the ample size, 7 x 9½ inches, provides an effective page for the well-selected illustrations. A theatrical obituary and the catalog of world premieres add usefulness. The latter might well be supplemented with a list of New York and London premieres. Thus *Waiting for Godot* would be recorded for its Broadway premiere, not to speak of the numerous important revivals and debuts in the off-Broadway houses. Certainly these are a significant element in the international picture. Since the *Annual* will properly take its place as a work of reference, an index of authors

and plays would also be welcome. Undoubtedly, given the support it merits, the specific purposes and features of the volume will be brought to a format which will make it an indispensable handbook for every member of the international theatre community.

ROBERT D. HORN

THE TECHNIQUE OF ACTING, by F. Cowles Strickland, McGraw-Hill, 306 pp.
Price \$5.95.

This book is an explanation and exposition of techniques employed in the craft of acting. It takes up such subjects as movement, phrasing, timing, motivation, pace, style, the design of a role. The organization is sensible, the suggestions are nearly always acceptable without question, the choice of play scenes for study is excellent because the plays are either familiar or are easily obtainable.

The book, however, is difficult to evaluate. The most puzzling question is: For whom is the book written? If it is for the beginning student actor, the author too frequently doesn't say what technique to use or how to perform it; he is too general. If it is for the more experienced actor, much of the material will appear very naïve and many of the generalizations will be obvious because the actor knows from experience (or from his natural stage sense) that a vocal pause or a piece of action is desirable in this situation or that. If it is for the director, he surely possesses sufficient experience and imagination to know dozens of the simple fundamentals which are included. For either the beginning actor or director there are also sins of omission; for example, there are numerous references to the Stanislavsky system but it is never clearly explained.

There are many helpful observations: "It should be obvious . . . that the test of the abilities of an actor should not rest with the possession of a voice of any particular quality, but rather with the use he makes of it." "There are many occasions when the actor will wish to use movement to focus the attention of the audience on himself just before he speaks." "The audience will pay more attention to what he is doing than to who he is."

Some statements and observations are too general for the average amateur actor: "Only when an actor reveals and conceals emotion can he be said to have restraint." (The author does not suggest how the actor can both reveal and conceal emotion to gain this restraint.) "The actor would do well to select the technical device best suited to the lines before he works out the techniques to be used for the rest of the scene." (Everyone will agree; but does the actor know enough to make this selection of techniques and work them out?)

Other affirmations raise questions: "It is easy for the student actor to discover which techniques combine naturally, since such combinations are as natural to the actor as a person as they are to the character that the actor is attempting to play." (Is this true? If so, why spend so much time studying these matters?)

Occasionally something is not clear and needs elaboration: "The student of technique should constantly remember that there is no special merit in playing any one scene in any particular way, but there is great merit in being able to play any scene in many ways."

The book has the curious effect of suggesting a doctor's dissertation in which much fundamental, obvious and general material has been meticulously analyzed and in detail. To whom the material is directed is not always apparent. How the actor is going to profit from a study of it is not always clear. The author possibly may take comfort in the fact that many others have attempted to write books on acting and the great majority have not met with any better success.

ALLEN CRAFTON

A HANDBOOK FOR THE AMATEUR THEATRE, by Peter Cotes, New York, Philosophical Library, Inc., 1957, 424 pp. Price \$12.50.

From England comes a new book on the amateur theatre by a man well acquainted with both the amateur and professional theatre of England and America. He views with enthusiasm, idealism and high praise those non-professional groups which, the world over, are dedicated to the serious production of worth-while drama. Yet he takes a hard and level-headed look at the problems involved and warns of dangerous pitfalls.

The first half of the book deals with the various areas of theatre production. A number of the chapters on technical theatre, each written by an expert in his respective field, add little to the bulk of material already available on the subject. Moreover, since this is a British publication, the names and numbers of materials and instruments and addresses of suppliers are of little value to the American thespian. The discussions of the actor, director and playwright, however, contributed by Mr. Cotes himself, are fresh, professional in approach and inspiring. Emphasizing loyalty to the script, discipline and the importance of "ensemble," these chapters include much that our amateur theatre is not yet aware of and our professional theatre has forgotten.

The chapters on Business Management and Publicity form the hard core of the book. Here, Cotes feels, is the ogre which most often threatens the success of dramatic ventures. Regardless of the high intentions and talent of the group, shaky business management usually insures doom. Cotes drives home his point through detailed suggestions and examples.

The chapter entitled "Shaw and the Amateur" at first glance seems out of place in a play production book, but the reader soon realizes that Shaw's wit and wisdom reflect Cotes' own deep-seated belief in the value and necessity of amateur companies. He quotes from a speech once delivered by Shaw, "... the drama in this country and in every country is not kept alive by the great theatres . . . but by the love of the people for the drama and the attempts they make themselves, when they are starved by the professional circuits, to give performances in the places the professional circuits do not reach."

The remainder of the book is a frank discussion of the successes and failures of amateur ventures in the far-flung countries and colonies of the British Commonwealth. The material is interesting as an historical record, but of little immediate value to an American producing company which has turned to the book for practical information and advice.

Also included are a glossary of theatrical terminology, a bibliography of helpful books listed by subject, an impressive list of British organizations which aid amateur societies and a list of theatrical publishers and suppliers, all British. The twenty-seven pages of photographs do little to illuminate the text.

The latest British import has much to recommend it, although it is of limited value to amateur theatre actors, directors and producers in the United States.

JACK BROOKING

Books Received

The Theatre in Soviet Russia, by Nicholai A. Gorchakov, translated by Edgar Lehrman, Columbia University Press, New York, 1957, 480 pp. Price \$10.00.

Passages from Finnegans Wake: A Free Adaptation for the Theater, by Mary Manning, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, 75 pp. Price \$3.25.

Radio and Television Plays, edited by Lawrence H. Feigenbaum, Globe Book Company, New York, 1956, 240 pp. Price \$2.56.

Six Plays of Strindberg, translated by Elizabeth Sprigge, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1955. 304 pp. Price \$1.25.

Nude with Violin, by Noel Coward, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1958, 115 pp. Price \$3.00.

The Cave Dwellers, by William Saroyan, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1958, 187 pp. Price \$3.50.

Broadway's Best, by John Chapman, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1957, 329 pp. Price \$4.50.

Gustav Adolph, by August Strindberg, translated by Walter Johnson, University of Washington Press, 1957, 233 pp. Price \$4.00.

The Modern Theatre, edited by Eric Bentley, Volume 5, Doubleday and Company, New York, 1957, 310 pp. Price 95c.

Four Modern Plays, Rinehart and Company, New York, 1957, 338 pp. Price 95c.

Costuming for the Modern Stage, by Laura Zirner, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1957, 50 pp.



